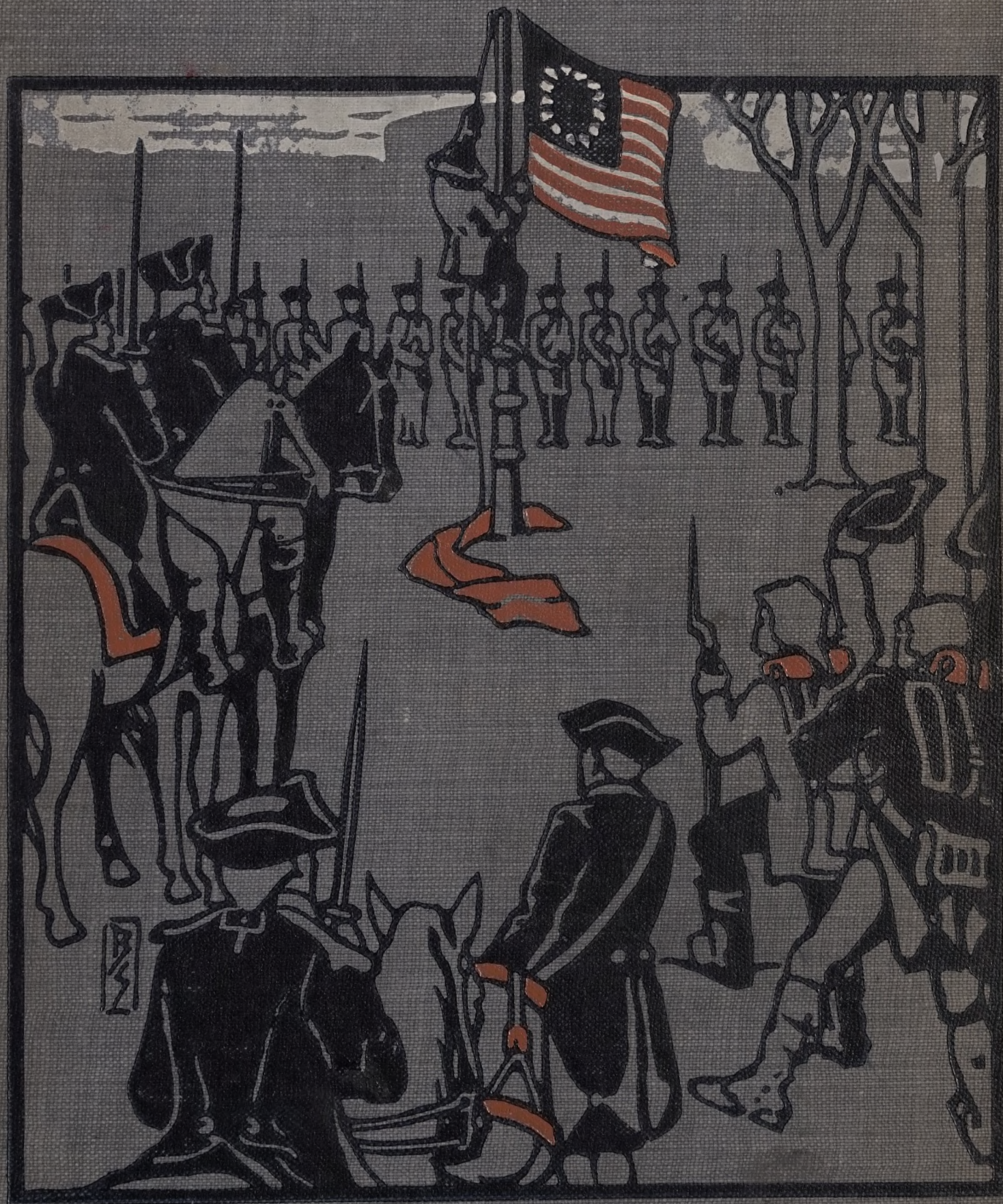
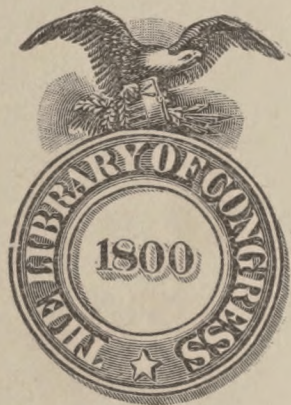


TOM STRONG BOY-CAPTAIN



ALFRED BISHOP MASON



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TOM STRONG
WASHINGTON'S SCOUT

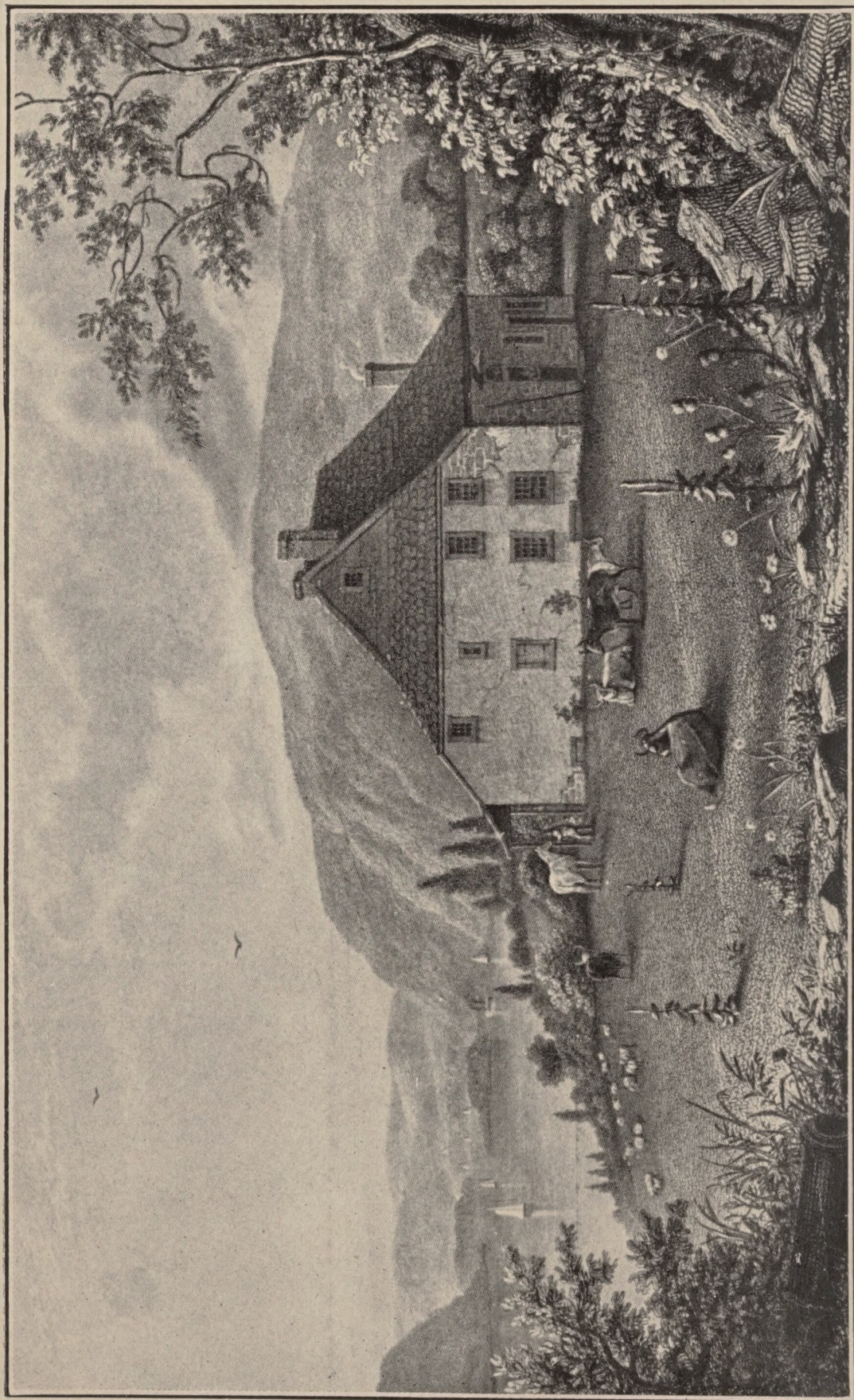
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WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS, HASBROUCK HOUSE, NEWBURG, NEW YORK

TOM STRONG, BOY - CAPTAIN

A STORY OF AMERICA

By

ALFRED BISHOP MASON

Author of "Tom Strong, Washington's Scout"

ILLUSTRATED



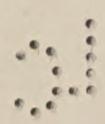
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This Tale of a Stout-hearted Boy
Is Dedicated to a Dear Little Girl

HARRIET

FOREWORD

MANY of the persons and personages who appear upon the pages of this book have already lived, some in history and some in the pages of "Tom Strong, Washington's Scout." Those who wish to know the boy's story from its beginning should read that book too.

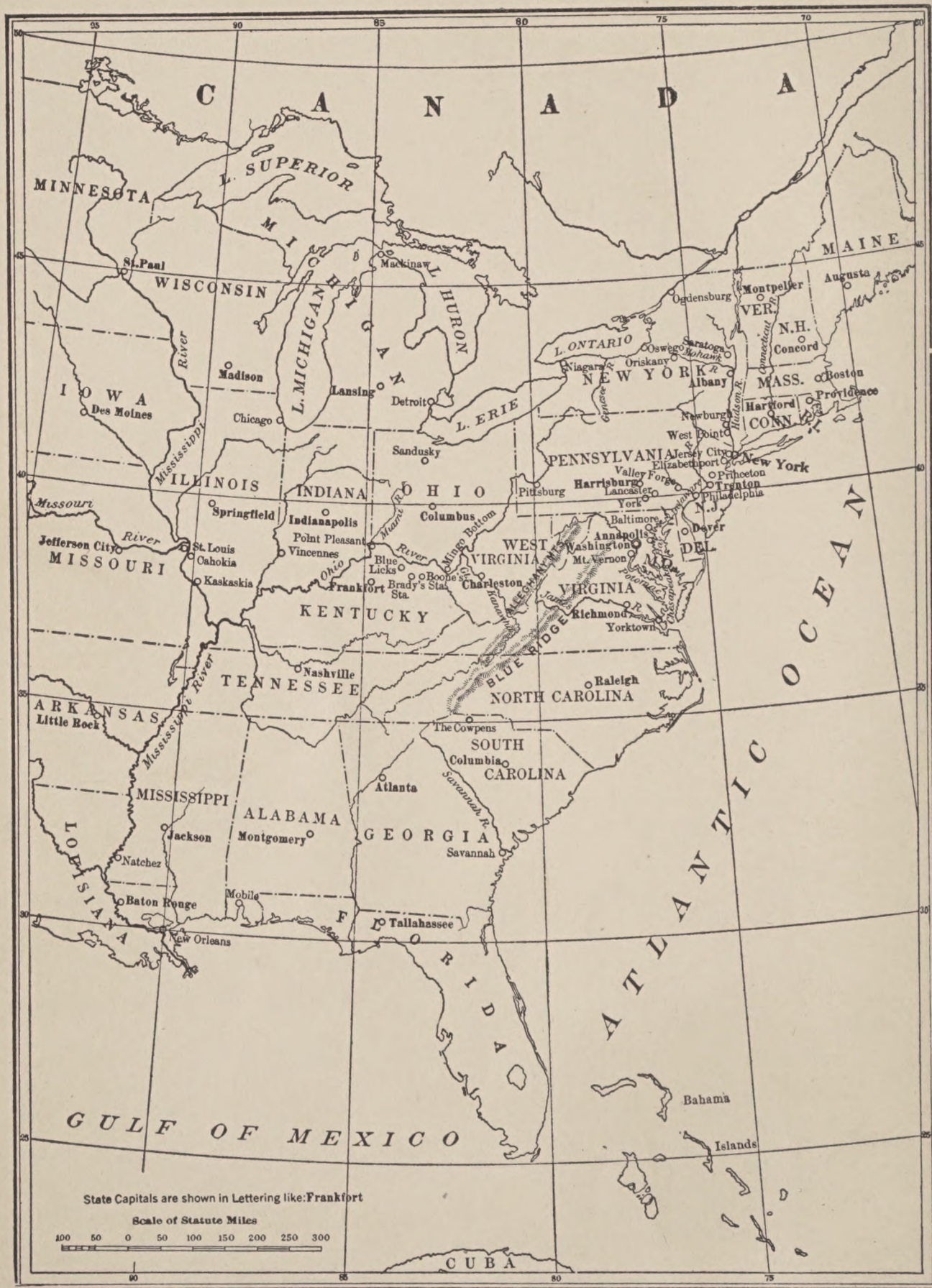
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TOM STRONG, BOY-CAPTAIN



TOM STRONG, BOY-CAPTAIN

CHAPTER I

“STOP!”

The old trapper had said it under his breath, but the word rang like a trumpet in Tom Strong's ear. When men are walking side by side with Death, every sense is strained, every nerve is tense.

Tom stopped and stood still, peering around a tree-trunk into the tangled forest, so bright with the colors of autumn that a painted savage might well escape detection amid the blaze of red and yellow leaves.

Zed Pratt slipped to Tom's side with a step as noiseless as a feather floating in the air. His voice sank yet lower.

“It's too still. The birds have stopped singing. See that squirrel hide a hundred yards ahead. There are *men* near us, Tom. And men means Injuns in Kentucky.”

Tom tried to see the squirrel, but in vain. It took Zed's trained eye—trained by years of danger in the Indian-haunted forests where he had trapped the otter and the beaver—to distinguish the little animal that had suddenly flattened itself on the topmost bough of a giant tree further down the trail. It had seen the boy and the trapper, perhaps; but it had seen other men. It knew that when there was a certain motion below, the motion of men, men who carried guns, guns that shot with deadly precision, it was time for squirrels to hide and keep still.

The man and the boy looked and listened. For a while they saw nothing and heard nothing. Then the trapper both saw and heard. His grasp tightened on Tom's elbow. He pushed him gently into the hollow trunk of the tall sycamore behind which they had been standing. He followed him into the shelter.

In a moment an Indian, almost naked, in full war-paint, slipped noiselessly by, coming from the west. Tom and the trapper had come from the east. Then came another, and another, and another. A few

seconds later, from a little glade near by, where a tiny sparkle of water danced across the trail, there came a guttural sound.

“Ugh! Foot!”

The foremost savage had stopped and was bending over the little brook. His comrades crowded about him. There was the mark of a foot there. Zed had taught Tom much woodcraft during the five years since the boy tumbled into the trapper's arms in the boat at the foot of Wall Street, bound for the battle of Long Island, but the pupil was not yet perfect. While Zed always walked the wilderness without leaving a trace, Tom did so only sometimes. At the brooklet, his foot had slipped from a stone and had left on the gravel-shore a faint print of moccasined toes. The fierce eye of the Delaware read it as if it were the print in a book.

“Is it fresh?”

The speaker was a tall man, dressed (or undressed) as an Indian, painted as an Indian, but the lines of his face and the tone of his voice betrayed him. He was Simon Girty, a renegade white,

fiercer, more bloodthirsty, more cruel than the demons who obeyed him throughout the smiling plains and tree-clad hills of what is now Ohio, and throughout the lovely glades and splendid forests of what was even then often called Kentucky and, perhaps, more often "the Dark and Bloody Ground." Simon Girty was one of four brothers, captured by Indians with their mother and stepfather years before in a foray on the Pennsylvania frontier. They had been taken across the Ohio. In an Indian village on the Miami, they had seen their stepfather bound to the stake and tortured to death. The mother's fate is a mystery, but the four sons grew up to manhood among their captors and were adopted into the tribe. All of them were dreaded in every little hamlet, in every solitary hut, where the white pioneers of civilization made their clearings and plowed their fields or pitched their bark wigwams and trapped for furs at a daily risk of life, but with a daily draught of that splendid freedom that only the wilderness has to give. Of the four, Simon was the worst. Mothers scared their children into stillness with his name. Men shuddered as

they told the tale of his devilish doings. He once spared an old friend; he once ransomed a captive woman. The rest of his record was as black and as red as the paint that covered his face on the war-path. He was the leader of the wolf-packs that harried the western frontier in this Year of Our Lord, 1781. Again he asked:

“Is it fresh?”

The savage who had kneeled over the footprint rose to his feet with a hyena smile.

“Few minutes. Not more. White man.”

“Only one?”

There was another close study of earth and water, leaf and fallen twig. Despite their deadly danger, Zed grinned and nudged Tom, as they crouched together in the tree-trunk, when the Indian answered:

“One. No more. My scalp. You go on. I find, kill, catch up.”

“We will all find and kill.”

“The Bear-Who-Walks needs no help.”

The eyes of the savage flashed angrily, but Girty's

look dominated him. His fierce glance fell, yet he muttered:

“The scalp belongs to me.”

Tom felt his scalp crawl over his ears.

“You shall have it,” said Girty.

The three Indians and the renegade spread into a half-circle and began casting about for signs of their prey, like hounds on the trail of a fox. Zed looked at the priming of Tom’s gun and of his own. Those were the days of flintlocks. There was a firm hand-clasp between man and boy. Then they waited.

We left Tom and Zed, on the closing page of “Tom Strong, Washington’s Scout,” captains of the Continental Army, serving for the day on Washington’s staff, on that day of days, October 19, 1781, when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. Then they were hunters of men in the midst of an army. Now, alone in this farflung forest, they were hunted of men. This was the way of it.

A few days after the capture of Cornwallis, the boy and the man, captains both, both made so for

gallantry on the field of battle, were sitting together on a Virginia rail fence, in front of the log-house where they were quartered in Yorktown.

“Tom,” said the trapper, “the war’s over. Our country’s ours, not the King’s any longer. What are ye goin’ to do?”

“Do? I’m going to stay in the army until we *know* the war’s over. Then I’m going to New York—and to Mother——”

“God bless her,” interjected the trapper. “She’s the motherest mother I ever knew.”

“And work and make her as happy as I can. You must come with me, Zed. Mother and I want you to stay with us forever.”

“No town for me,” said the trapper, sturdily. “I’ll come and visit ye and tell your mother what a fine lad ye are—she’s never tired of hearing that—whenever I have the chance, but I must see the Big Woods again, and trap the beaver again, and bet my life against Indian tricks again. I want to breathe free once more. There ain’t room to breathe this side the Alleghanies. Come with me. Try it for a year and I’ll go home with ye then. I can’t now.

I just can't. I just must have the great open spaces and the Big Woods. Come with me, my boy."

"But we can't leave the army. The King may send more troops here and the army must be ready for them."

"There'll be no more. Colonel Hamilton says so. He ought to know. He knows everything. And he says he can get us furloughs, so we can go now and come back if needs be."

"I'd like a furlough if there's to be no more fighting, but I'd go home to Mother."

"It's little ye'll see of your mother for a year or so. The Britishers will hold New York till peace is signed. She can't get out of town, and if ye go there, the only choice they'll give ye is to be shot or to be hung, perhaps not that. They'll just hang ye offhand."

Colonel Alexander Hamilton got them their furloughs, on condition that they would go to Kentucky. What is now the splendid State of that name was then a province of Virginia. General Washington was glad to guide their minds and turn

their steps to the western outpost of the Old Dominion he loved so well.

While the Americans were battling against British armies and their hired Hessians in the East, they had to battle in the West against British officials and their hired Indians. Early in the war Colonel George Rogers Clark had led a Virginian force far to the West and captured the English outposts at Vincennes, Indiana, and at Cahokia and Kaskaskia, two sleepy old French settlements in Illinois, on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, near St. Louis. The little garrison he left could not, however, overawe the many Indian villages between the Alleghanies and the Father-of-Waters, as the Indians had baptized the majestic Mississippi. These Indians were constantly spurred on to murder and rapine by the commandants of the English posts along the Great Lakes, Ogdensburg, Oswego, and Niagara in New York, Detroit and Mackinaw in Michigan. These five posts were held by England until after Washington's second presidential term began, in 1793. Detroit was the especial center of activity, where savage forays were planned, guns and ammunition

supplied, scalps and spoils bought. In the Southwest, too, English officers stirred up Indian raids. From the Southwest, Captain Alexander Cameron officially reported, July 15, 1779: "They [the Indians] keep continually scalping and killing in Virginia, North Carolina, and the frontier of Georgia." An official report from Detroit, October 23, 1781, to Lord George Germaine at London says: "Many smaller Indian parties have been very successful. . . . Parties are continually employed upon the back settlements. From the Illinois country to the frontiers of New York there is a continual succession. . . . The perpetual terror and losses of the inhabitants will, I hope, operate powerfully in our favour." Washington planned wisely when he sent the trapper and Tom to join the thin line of the defenders of our Western frontier.

They had climbed the Alleghanies, and had seen from their summits the Promised Land, and had passed through the little settlements that fringed the mountains and became fewer and smaller as one tramped toward the setting sun. They were pressing forward to Boone's Station, where Daniel

Boone stood sentinel on the farthest frontier. They were but a few miles from it when they had sought refuge in the hollow tree, near which Simon Girty, Bear-Who-Walks, and the two other braves were now searching for them.

Was the old trapper trapped at last?

If he had been alone, he would have wriggled silently away through the underbrush which surrounded them, and which hid the cavity in the tree, but there was no chance of Tom's being able to do that. They must await their foes where they were. In a thistledown of a whisper, a mere shadow of speech, he gave Tom his instructions.

"Shoot as soon as ye're *sure* to kill, not a tenth of a second before. As soon as ye've shot, fling yourself on your face and reload. Their bullets'll go over ye. Have your knife handy."

The silence was terrible. There was not a sound from the four demons so near. Tom fancied they were holding their very breath.

Then came a roar, a crash, a blow that shook the earth. A great tree near by, eaten away by the slow decay of centuries, fell headlong. Two braves

leapt into sight, leaping to avoid death by the tree-fall only to meet death by the flight of bullets. Zed and Tom fired together, flung themselves on their faces, and reloaded with feverish energy. The two Indians went to the Happy Hunting Grounds. One bullet whizzed through the tree, three feet above the ground. Then silence again, the terrible silence. Then a whisper.

“Stay here.”

Tom nodded as Zed crawled, snakelike, out into the brush. A moment later, there was a shout, a furious struggle, a frantic yell from Zed: “Tom! Come!”

The boy leapt forward with great bounds, to find Zed and a painted savage locked in an iron grip, their guns on the ground beside them. The Indian's right hand, gripping a hunting-knife, was slowly escaping from Zed's grasp. A second more and the blade would have pierced the trapper's heart. But there was a second to spare. Tom's bullet flew towards its mark. It struck a finger of the upraised hand. The knife dropped. The man twisted himself out of Zed's hold and dived into the brush. He could be heard crashing through the forest like

a maddened deer. Then there was silence again.

Zed sank to the ground, gasping.

"Are you hurt, Zed? Are you hurt?" Tom cried, with a sob in his voice.

"Nary a mite, son," the trapper grinned. "He squeezed the breath out o' me, that's all. He's got away, but we're a gun and a knife to the good, anyway. Hush, Tom. What am I thinking of? Where's the fourth Indian? Two of 'em won't ever hurt anybody any more; the one that jumped on me hasn't a weapon left; but where's the other?"

A long, gasping sigh answered the question. Zed sprang to his feet, clutched his gun, and, stooping, ran towards the sound. Tom was close behind him. Under one of the big boughs of the fallen tree lay Bear-Who-Walks. He had been knocked senseless and now lay helpless. His tomahawk was in his belt, his gun was beside him, but both arms were pinioned to the ground. Consciousness had returned with the long sigh. He glared at his approaching enemies with stoic calm, with haughty defiance.

Zed drew his knife as he approached the helpless warrior. His eyes gleamed with as savage hate as

that which flashed from Bear-Who-Walks. Tom stepped between the two and laid his hand upon the trapper's arm.

"Don't, Zed; please, don't. I couldn't stand having you kill him."

The old trapper stared at him with utter amazement.

"Couldn't stand—my—killing him? Why, boy, you just killed one of the varmints yourself."

"In the hot blood of a fight, to save our lives, yes. But not this way, in cold blood. 'Twould be murder."

"Get out of my way, boy. The only good Injun is a dead Injun. Quit your foolin'. I'm goin' to kill him as I would a snake. He's worse'n the pizenest rattler that ever struck."

"Zed, I just had the good luck to save your life. Give me a life for a life. Let this fellow go. Please, Zed."

It was hard work, but Tom carried his point. The grumbling trapper gave way to what he thought was the wildest folly.

"Have it your own way, son. Have it your own

blame fool way. Turn the murderer loose to murder some more. Shall we give him our guns and knives as well as his own?"

The boy laughed. "Well, hardly that. His are fair spoils of war."

They took his weapons, then lifted the bough that held him down. Bruised and bleeding, he rose to his feet and faced them steadily.

"Bear-Who-Walks will sing the death-song of the Delaware. No Long Knife can make him a squaw in his heart."

"Oh, hush, you red devil. Go!"

Zed pointed to the forest about them. The Delaware stood still, bewildered, unbelieving. He thought his foes could not be such fools.

"Go, I tell you. I wanted kill you. Boy says 'Go.' Not I. But go."

The Indian turned to Tom.

"Go—and go quick," said Tom. And he, too, pointed to the forest.

Bear-Who-Walks pressed the fingers of his right hand into the blood upon his side and smeared Tom's forehead red.

“ In my wigwam there will be venison and maize for my blood-brother. The young Long Knife need never fear the tomahawks of the Delawares. I, Bear-Who-Walks, say it.”

With the stately tread of a chief, he walked into the forest and was swallowed up in it.

“ Why did he call me ‘ Young Long Knife ’ ? ”

“ ’Tis their name for the whites, my boy. Well, well, perhaps the red devil may do ye a good turn some day. I’ve heard of such things. But I misdoubt it. ’Twould have been safer to kill him. At any rate, we’ve two scalps to show old Daniel Boone.”

As he spoke, he tucked the hideous trophies into his belt. Then the man and boy, laden with their enemies’ weapons as well as their own, turned to the trail, and plodded silently along. The scalps swinging as Zed moved made Tom rather ill, but he knew the old trapper was sore over the release of Bear-Who-Walks and he knew, too, that scalping was the bloody rule of the Dark and Bloody Ground, for white man and red man alike. So he said nothing.

Little red drops fell on the ground as Zed walked.

CHAPTER II

THE trail led them to a clearing. At its edge they halted and waved a handkerchief in sign of peace until the same signal was given from the log-stockade that stood in the center of the open space. The clearing stretched a little more than a rifle-shot on every side of the palisade. This was to prevent a besieging force hiding under cover and still attacking. Tom and the trapper stepped into the open and walked forward to the door of the little fort. A gun-barrel gleamed in the afternoon sun at a porthole on each side of the gateway. They were within twenty feet of it before the guns were withdrawn and the gate opened. In Kentucky in 1781 eternal vigilance was the price not only of liberty, but of life. Even then, a half-dozen armed men barred their way for a moment.

“Who be ye?” said their spokesman.

“Captain Zed Pratt,” answered the trapper, “and this is Captain Tom Strong, both of the Continental Army.”

“Down East you must make captains out of rather young saplings,” laughed the frontiersman. “A man has to be grown up hereabouts to lead other men. Come in, Old-Man-Cap, and you, Boy-Cap, too.” He smiled at the embarrassed boy and held out the ready hand of Kentucky hospitality. “I’m Simon Kenton,” he added. “Most Kentuckians knows who Simon Kenton is. And so does lots of Indians.”

Despite the braggadocio of the man, he had a winning way with him. And his boast was a true one. Next to Daniel Boone ranks Simon Kenton in the annals of the Kentucky frontier. He was born in Fauquier County, Virginia, in 1755. When he was nineteen, he could neither read nor write. Leadership was born in him. He had a row over some rustic belle; knocked his rival down; thought he had killed him; fled across the mountains to “the Dark and Bloody Ground.” Since then, his life had been one long Indian fight. He had been captured many times. He had run the gauntlet thirteen times. Running the gauntlet between two long lines of Indians whose idea of joy was to see

how near they could come to killing a captive without quite doing so was a ghastly torture. Once he had been tied to the stake and a fire kindled at his feet. There was no risk he had not run, none he was not ready to run. Unlike Daniel Boone, who was by nature a lover of peace, Simon Kenton loved fighting. He liked hunting big game. The biggest game of all was a live Indian.

The attitude of the American to the Indian has always been barbarian. Washington commented, in a letter, upon the fact that the frontiersman killed Indians when he could and did not seem to regard them as human. William Campbell, a man of sterling and gentle character, inserts in a love-letter to his wife, "his dearest Betsey," the sister of Patrick Henry: "I have now the scalp of an Indian. . . . The first time I go up, I shall take it along to let you see it."

Not a great many years ago, a dozen men camped for some weeks in Wyoming. The party had a guide, a man who spent his winters with his old parents in Pennsylvania, the rest of his time on the plains. He seemed a gentle person. The Indians

were at peace just then. Soon after the campers reached Salt Lake City, one of them had a letter from this guide. He wrote, in substance: "I am sending you a good headdress. I got it from an Indian. I saw him before he saw me and got a good shot at him."

When our heroes were safe inside Boone's Station, they saw it was 250 by 125 feet, with walls of alternate log-cabin and stockade; with corner blockhouses projecting beyond the walls, so as to protect them by a flanking fire; with two massive framed gates. There was not a pound of iron used in the making of the fort. Windows there were none, but portholes were a-plenty. The cabin doors were thick and solid, with massive bars. Each hut was a little fort in itself, so that if the stockade which surrounded them were carried each could be defended to the last. A cold spring bubbled up in the center. Buffalo meat and venison were drying in the open, hung from long poles supported in the crotches of uprights. Two or three robust women were on an open porch. In a corner half a dozen children, who had gathered in a shy group to see

the strangers, went back to their play. They were playing Indian. One of them was bound to a stake and the others were piling firewood about him. It was grim sport, fit for the children of the backwoods.

There was eager questioning. Tom and Zed told the details of Cornwallis's surrender, rumors of which had filtered through the countryside before their arrival. They told of their tramp over the Blue Ridge. They told of the journey from hamlet to hamlet on the Dark and Bloody Ground. Finally they told of their escape that day.

"I seen them two scalps wuz fresh," said Jim Kerr, a long, slabsided, tobacco-chewing frontiersman. "I sort o' wondered where you got 'em. Me and Bear-Who-Walks has shot at each other more'n once. When you've bin hereabouts a while longer, Boy-Cap, you won't let any redskin git away like you did the Bear. Will he, boys?"

There was a full-throated savage growl of assent from all the men.

"So there's two of the devils loose near here, Bear-Who-Walks and t'other one that ran. He

must be the white man you heerd talkin'. Gosh, do you s'pose he was Girty?"

There was a moment's silence. The men looked almost scared. Then they sprang to their feet, seized their guns, and ran to the gateway. A shot had been fired at the edge of the clearing. A man was running at full speed to the stockade. It was Daniel Boone.

Boone was a mild-mannered man, five feet, ten inches high, with a gentle smile, but with hazel eyes that could flash fire. He was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1735. He married, farmed, and half-starved on the Yadkin River in North Carolina. In 1769, he came to Kentucky. He was for long a captive among the Ohio Indians. He was once adopted, in fact, by Blackfish, a Shawnee chief. An Indian adoption was a rather painful ceremony. Every hair on Boone's head except enough of them to make a scalp-lock was plucked out with tweezers. Then he was stripped, thrown into a creek, and scrubbed for hours "to take the white blood out." It was only after this that the new tribesman was painted and the feasting



DANIEL BOONE

so, but we all wuz so int'rested in what Old-Man-Cap and Boy-Cap here wuz tellin' us we sort o' forgot."

"Ye sort o' forgot the wimmen and children too, didn't ye? If the Indians hed come when you all wuz flappin' your ears aroun', they wouldn't 'a' forgot to kill them after they'd settled you. Don't forgit ag'in, that's all. Who all are our new friends?"

So Tom and the trapper told their tale again. Daniel Boone fingered the two scalps with evident pleasure, but his face fell as he looked at them.

"I'd hoped," he said, "I'd hoped ye might 'a' got the white man. If ye had, I could 'a' forgiven ye, Boy-Cap, for being such a durn fool as to let Bear-Who-Walks git away. That white man was—Simon Girty!"

No orator ever made a stronger climax. Boone's words thrilled his audience. They rose like one man and clamored for him to lead them in chase of the dreaded fugitive.

"It ain't no use," replied Boone. "Girty's got four hours' start of us. Night's a-comin'. We've

lost our chance this time. But when we do catch him——”

They vied with each other in describing how the tortures Girty had given others would be meted out to him, when once he fell into their hands. It was a scene of savagery, made worse by the women's joining eagerly in the talk and supplying one gruesome suggestion after another as to methods of torture. The red man learned from the white the love of liquor, and the white man learned from the red the love of cruelty. Both sets of pupils were apt.

Here in Boone's Station our heroes spent that winter, with an occasional week in the open by themselves. There were no forays in winter, for the snow made tracking a raiding party too easy. Tom learned to trap, to hunt, to cook, to make a bark-shanty. He became wise in the lore of the woods. He taught the children of the little fort to read and write. In the children's class for a while was Daniel Boone, but when the old pioneer had learned to scrawl something he was pleased to regard as his signature, his interest in “book-l'arnin'” slackened.

He told Tom he would rather read the leaves of trees than the leaves of books.

“The sky talks to me and the winds and the trees. I don’t care much for the chatter o’ men, whether it be spoken or writ. When a real man’s alone in the forest, he ain’t never lonely. Somethin’s sayin’ somethin’ to him every minnit.”

It was a mild winter. The snow vanished early in February. With it vanished the peace of the frontier. The Ohio tribes were on the warpath before March began. The frontier stirred in its wrath and planned revenge. Word trickled through the hills and valleys that the white man was going to strike home at the Indians’ homes. Volunteers were to gather at Mingo Bottom on the Ohio in May. They came by twos and threes. One of the twos was Zed and Tom. The trapper was in high good humor over the watchword of the campaign-to-be: “No prisoners.” Tom himself, after six months of frontier life, after hearing hundreds of tales of incredible barbarity, was less inclined to plume himself upon having freed Bear-Who-Walks. What had that particular savage done since? What was he

doing now? What would he do? How far was Tom responsible for what Bear-Who-Walks had done, was doing, would do?

When they reached Mingo Bottom, they found about five hundred men in a state of excitement, not over the proposed campaign, but over the question of who was to command them on the campaign. Both Pennsylvania and Virginia had sent militia there, but there was no apparent difference between the militia and a mob. There was no discipline. Neither State had ventured to commission a commander. The free men of the frontier would serve under only those chiefs they had themselves chosen. There were two candidates, Colonel William Crawford, veteran, gentleman, old friend of Washington, and David Williamson, a man of rude force, who had just distinguished himself by an atrocious act. He had thrown ninety-six Christian Indians, men, women and children, converts of a Moravian Mission, into an extemporized jail, and had then ordered them butchered in cold blood. The horrid deed was done. It had revolted even the frontiersmen, or at least some of them. It cost Williamson

the election, but Crawford beat him by only five votes out of the five hundred.

On a beautiful May morning the little army moved northwestward with some slight semblance of discipline and order. Scouts preceded the main body about half a mile. Zed and Tom were among them. Then came a straggling line of men, so many of them in fringed buckskin trousers and coats that they seemed in uniform. Then Colonel Crawford, with one staff officer. Zed and Tom were to complete his staff when the scouts should fall back on the main force. Then another straggling line. A few pack-animals brought up the rear. The nine-days' march had begun.

As they neared the Sandusky plains Indian signs began. Crawford had hoped to surprise his wily foes, but his undisciplined troops could not be kept still. They shouted and they sang. Some of them discharged their guns from time to time, in sheer bravado. On June fourth, when they struck the first Wyandot village, it was deserted. They were now on a vast prairie, studded with swamps and with small groves. They pushed forward. Zed

and Tom, a mile in advance, saw a flock of wild geese rise from a distant swamp. A moment later, sandhill cranes flew from a nearby barren. Then prairie-chickens, darting through the tall grass, ran almost into the muzzles of their guns.

“The game is scared by our game,” said Zed. “Get back and tell Crawford there’s Injuns here. I’ll stay and mark ’em. They’ll be in the trees somewheres.”

Tom, crouching, ran back through the tall grass, his going marked only by the swirl and wave of the grass closing above and behind him as he ran. He reported. A sharp command rang out.

“Forward. Follow Captain Strong. When you’re in touch with the enemy, scatter to right and left and surround. Don’t try to rush them till we feel them out and find how strong they are.”

In a few minutes Tom met Zed, creeping back.

“They’re in yon clump of timber,” said the old trapper. “About three hundred of ’em. There’s whites with ’em.”

Zed’s trained eyes had read the signs well. From

Detroit, Captain Caldwell, with three hundred Indians and a few white men, had been rushed forward to meet the invasion, known days ago through the restless Indian sleuths who had trailed the troops and laughed low, blood-curdling laughs over their noisy lack of discipline. Almost as he spoke, a rifle cracked from the trees he had pointed out. The long, small-bored, heavy-barreled rifle of that day had a range of but 150 yards. The shot fell short.

Instantly the frontiersmen, with a whoop, regardless of orders, rushed straight at the island of timber in the sea of grass. When they were well within range, a crashing volley checked them. The next second another volley turned them back.

"I told ye there wuz whites there. That's disciplined firin'. One rank fires while another reloads. Now let's see the Cunnle handle this mob of ours."

Zed had pulled Tom down beside him in the grass and was muttering angrily into his ear.

Colonel Crawford rallied his scared militia and deployed them about three sides of the enemy's position. There was scattered firing until night-

fall. Then the dispirited mob, who had been playing at being soldiers, made a rude camp, not so much because Crawford commanded it as because they wished it. The night was noiseless, save for an occasional shot from the outposts. At headquarters there was angry talk. Williamson was whining to retreat. Crawford was firm to fight. A chorus of backwoodsmen, thronging about the leaders, shouted approval of the cowardly course.

"It's no use," said one of their spokesmen. "There's a thousand Injuns there. I seen four hundred in one line poppin' at us. If we stay, we're dead men. And they'll raid the settlements behind us while they hold us here. They'll kill our wives and children. We belong home quick as we can git there. I'm goin' now."

He was as good, or as bad, as his word. He did go. So did others, that night, and others, next day, while the little army lay supine; while Crawford vacillated between ordering an attack or ordering a retreat; while twenty-four precious hours slipped by unused.

About four o'clock Zed reported that 140 Shaw-

nees had joined the British force. That was the last straw. When a Wyandot made a captive, he tomahawked him and put his head on a pole, much as the heads of those who fought for "Prince Charlie" in 1745, when the fascinating and faithless Stuarts made their last clutch for the crown England had taken from them, were put on spikes on Temple Bar, a low arch that spanned the Strand in London until some years ago. Then modern London sold this priceless memorial of London of old to a beer-brewer. But when a Shawnee or a Delaware made a captive, death was the least thing that captive suffered.

The militia would retreat. They defied Crawford's orders and fled under Williamson's lead. The Indians of course instantly attacked. They hung upon the flanks of the fugitives for days. When the beaten and battered remnant reached Mingo Bottom, June thirteenth, Colonel Crawford was missing. So was Captain Tom Strong.

Captain Zedediah Pratt arrived at Mingo Bottom the next day. He had fetched a wide circuit about some Indians who had cut him off from his

fleeing comrades. The instant he found Tom was missing, he turned back and strode fiercely northward, bound to rescue "his boy," if Tom were alive; to avenge him, if Tom were dead.

The forest swallowed him up.

CHAPTER III

“**M**Y poor lad, I have brought you to an evil end.”

It was Colonel Crawford who spoke. It was Tom to whom he spoke.

They were together in a hut, bound hand and foot. A burly Indian sat in the doorway, making little splinters of wood. A knot of savages stood behind him, eying the prisoners with wolfish glances. One of them lounged in, spat upon Crawford and struck Tom. The others laughed.

“Great Spirit smell roasted white man soon,” said the guard.

Crawford and Tom were in a Shawnee village. On the night the militia fled, when the savages first attacked in force, Crawford had rallied his rear-guard and ordered a charge. He and Tom charged alone, only to fall captive. With their hands tied behind them, jeered, starving, and beaten, they had been taken northwestward for two days by half a

dozen Indians. They hoped their goal was Detroit, for the British, though they hounded on the Indians to strike and slay, did what they could to prevent the torturing of the prisoners their savage allies took. But the march stopped short at a Shawnee town. There, for seven days, they had lain helpless, always bound, always watched.

In Francis Parkman's "Conspiracy of Pontiac," he describes the towns of the Five Nations in western New York. These had served as patterns for the Shawnees. He says: "Surrounded by waving maize fields, and encircled from afar by the green margin of the forest, stood the ancient strongholds of the confederacy. The clustering dwellings were encompassed by palisades, in single, double, or triple rows, pierced with loopholes. . . . The area which these defenses inclosed was often several acres in extent and the dwellings, ranged in order within, were sometimes more than a hundred feet in length. Posts, firmly driven into the ground, with an intervening framework of poles, formed the basis of the structure; and its sides and arched roof were closely covered with layers of elm bark. Each of the

larger dwellings contained several distinct families, whose separate fires were built along the central space, while compartments on each side, like the stalls of a stable, afforded some degree of privacy. Here, rude couches were prepared, and bear- and deerskins spread; while above, the ripened ears of maize, suspended in rows, formed a golden tapestry." The lucid pages of Francis Parkman are a joy to read. His Indians are real, not like the fantastic puppets who stalk through the books of Fenimore Cooper.

To-day the braves were returning from their chase of the militia. All day long they straggled into the village, whooping with glee over the scalps they brought, exhibiting their spoils,—horses, blankets, guns, knives, buckskin coats and trousers, smeared with the blood of their late wearers. All day long they thronged into the hut where Crawford and Tom were, in order to gloat over the victims of the pitiless cruelty they were planning. It was a favorite jest to slap the faces of the prisoners with the scalps of the recent comrades of the helpless two. Tom, with set teeth, imitated Crawford's

stoic calm. Not even the quiver of an eyelid gave sign of his suffering. One big Indian, who had cuffed him and kicked him, pricked him with a knife, and pretended to be about to scalp him, finally turned away with gruff praise:

“Heap brave boy.”

“I have led you to an evil end,” Crawford had said.

“It isn’t the end yet,” answered Tom. “Zed will come to our aid—if he is alive. And it wasn’t your leadership, it was those cowards who wouldn’t follow it, that brought you and me here, Colonel. If you get away, Colonel, and I—don’t—please say to my mother——”

The boy’s voice died away and before he had mastered himself, some savages entered the hut, cut the thongs that bound them, jerked them to their feet and pushed them, stumbling, into the open. A deed almost too horrible to tell followed, but it is well we should know the price our gallant forefathers paid for the land we love. Tom was taken up a tree and lashed there. To make him look at the horrid scene below, an Indian sat beside him

and prodded him with a glittering knife if his eyes closed in horror for an instant. A great stake had been driven into the ground and a circle of hickory wood piled around it, about four yards off. Crawford was stripped and fastened by a long rope to the pole, so that he could walk freely. The wood was lighted. He was ringed about with fire. He was forced to walk. Embers were thrown under his feet. Powder was shot into his body. For two hours, without an outcry, with his lips moving in prayer, the tortured man endured his agony. Then he fell. There was a whoop of savage joy. Simon Girty, laughing in the crowd below, turned towards Tom, shook his fist at him, and shouted:

“Your turn next, young bantam!”

An Indian leapt over the line of fire, scalped the dying man, and put flaming brands on the wound. Colonel Crawford staggered to his feet, took a few faltering steps, called out to Tom: “Good-by, my lad; we’ll meet in heaven”; and was fortunate enough to die.

So perished a gallant man. In 1770, when George Washington floated down the Ohio as far as

the Kanawha, to locate lands for a company which was seeking a grant from the King, he had with him a guide, George Croghan, a veteran Scotch-Irish Indian trader, and a surveyor, William Crawford. The two surveyors became fast friends. Crawford served under his great chief in the Continental Army and rose to be a colonel. His blood was part of the price our country paid for the Mississippi Valley.

When Tom was untied from his perch, he almost fainted, but he whispered to himself, through bloodless lips: "Die game; die game." There was another stake driven into the ground a hundred feet away. Tom turned towards it, ready for all things. But his time had not come. It may be that even Girty was sated with cruelty for the nonce. It may be that the savages wished to prolong their pleasure into a two-days' festival of savagery. Certain it is that the boy was taken back to the prison-hut and again bound and put under guard. A whole week passed.

June 21st, 1782, there was high festival in the Shawnee town. A delegation of Delawares had

come to smoke the pipe of peace with the Shawnees and to dig up the hatchet for a joint raid on the settlements south of the Ohio. At dusk the council-chamber was full of warriors. The older men sat in a long oval. The young braves clustered in rows behind them. Lashed to a stout pole just within the doorway was Tom, brought there to grace his captors' triumph, just as captured barbarian kings were tied to Cæsar's chariot when he made triumphal entry into Rome. Opposite him, at the head of the oval, sat the Delaware chief, his face barred with paint, his hair bedecked with eagle feathers, his bronze body half covered by a blanket that had been snatched from a murdered woman's bed. Other women, squaws, had embroidered it with gay splashes of color and with the gleaming quills of the porcupine. As Tom peered through the dusk at him, the boy gave an involuntary start, despite the thongs that bound him, for in that savage chieftain he recognized Bear-Who-Walks. The Delaware saw the start. He stared with absolutely blank eyes at the captive, but he carelessly put his hand to his side and then across his forehead, as he had done

when he had christened Tom his blood-brother and bade him have no fear of the tomahawks of the Delawares. A faint hope stirred in Tom's heart. Was Bear-Who-Walks signaling to him to hope?

The pipe of peace was produced. It was carved of a sacred stone from Lake Superior, with symbolic decorations chiseled and painted. It passed from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth, about the inner group. When this silent ceremony was over, the oldest of the Shawnees rose, extended his arms, and said:

"Our hearts and our ears are open to our friends, the Delawares. Let them speak words of wisdom to their friends, the Shawnees."

A guttural assent sounded from a hundred savage throats.

Then Bear-Who-Walks stood stately before them, his blanket cast aside, only a belt and a breech-clout upon him. In the belt was a tomahawk. It was of Birmingham steel and bore the legend: "To My Trusty Friend, Bear-Who-Walks, From George III., Rex." Many a chief had been flat-

tered into fidelity by such a gift from the "Great-King-Across-the-Sea." The Indian's body was painted from face to foot with the vermilion and yellow bars that spelled "war." He began with a glowing picture of their life before the white intruders came. They were free and they hunted the game that swarmed upon a thousand hills and upon seas of prairie. Then the Long Knives came. The intruders had pushed the Indian back from the ocean, across the Alleghanies. Now they sought to push him still further back, across the Mississippi, into unknown regions where a myriad unfriendly tribes dwelt. But the Great-King-Across-the-Sea had promised that this should not be. He had sent them tomahawks and knives and guns. Flatboats laden with powder and bullets were even then approaching Detroit,—“all for us, all for the King's friends, the Shawnees, and your friends, the Delawares,—all for us, if we will but dig up the hatchet and drive the Long Knives back to the mountains. The Shawnees routed the white men, but one moon ago. Here in this town, the Long Knives' chief ate fire and died. Cannot the Shawnees and the

Delawares together kill the few men that are left upon our lands? Let us go together. Let us return together, laden with scalps and bringing captives. Captives!" He grinned ferociously, licking his lips as if he savored blood. "The men to the stake; the women to our wigwams; the children to grow up in our tribes! The Delawares have spoken."

He loosed his tomahawk and flung it furiously downward. It quivered in the earthen floor. The Shawnee chief stepped forward, picked up the hatchet, and held it out to Bear-Who-Walks, saying:

"The Delawares have brought us wisdom. The warpath is open. Delawares and Shawnees will tread it together when the second moon comes and the maize is stored for the winter. Have I said well?"

He turned to his tribesmen. They sprang to their feet. The awful war-whoop of the Indian rang out. The squaws, clustered outside, shrieked with delight. Then Simon Girty spoke:

"We have buffalo and venison for our friends, the Delawares, but we have something better with

which to honor them. Here is a prisoner. He is a boy. He will scream under the torture. It will be a sweet sound in the ears of our guest. It will be music for our feast. Let us make a burnt offering of the white boy. To the stake!"

Yells of joy approved the renegade's suggestion. Tom's blood ran cold.

Bear-Who-Walks was on his feet again. He had sat impassive while his harangue was being answered, while the war-whoop sounded, while Girty spoke. Now he lifted his hand and there was silence.

"It is well. My ears long for that music."

"There is no hope," thought Tom. "And I let him go free. God bless Zed. God help my mother. Poor Mother."

"My ears long for that music," repeated the speaker, "but my eyes long to enjoy the enemy's suffering too. Look, the night has fallen. Let the boy be put to the torture in full sunshine, when we can see him writhe in his agony, when we can note every flicker of pain that passes over his face, when we can see his very eyeballs burst!"

“Our guest has spoken. The white boy burns an hour after sunrise. Take him away.”

So the Shawnee chief summed up the situation. Tom was led back to his hut. The braves began their feast.

The boy's mind was in a whirl. Did Bear-Who-Walks mean to help him? He had certainly kept him alive over night, but he avowed doing so in order to enjoy more thoroughly seeing him tortured to-morrow. What good was this one night more? Yet hope, not to be denied, beat upon the door of his heart, opened it, and passed within. If Bear-Who-Walks really meant to save his “blood-brother,” he would try to do so that night. Tom decided to stay awake and stay hopeful. His guard bent over him with a flaring torch to make sure he was strongly bound. The savage showed him a basket of sweet-scented grass, full of pine-splinters, and by way of bidding him good-night said:

“Stick um all over you. Light um. You jump. You scream. Injun have fun.”

Then he and his light went out. All was silence.

Silence for weary hours, broken only by the shuffling step of an occasional dog. One dog apparently stopped beside the hut. Tom heard a noise as of a hound pawing the earth. There was a draught of fresh air. A hand came through under the bottom log. It held a knife that cut the thongs about Tom's hands. Then the knife was dropped. Bear-Who-Walks whispered: "Kill guard. Him asleep. Crawl to big cornfield. Me meet blood-brother there."

Tom did not kill the guard, who lay across the doorway, his arm around the basket of pine-splinters, but he stepped over him after he had slashed away the other thongs. Then he crawled to the cornfield. Bear-Who-Walks was there. He guided the boy across the field. He put him on a horse, a bit of cloth for a saddle, a halter for a bridle. He pointed to a star glittering in the eastern horizon. He said: "Ride hard. No sleep. Ride towards star. Four days, reach Fort Pitt." Before the boy could utter a syllable of thanks, the Indian had vanished into darkness.

Tom galloped towards the star, urging the good horse to utmost speed. Therein was his one chance

of safety. His flight was sure to be discovered by sunrise or before. Pursuit, swift, vengeful, the pursuit of a panther robbed of his prey, was also sure. And his trail was sure to be found. Through the night that flashed by and through the early morning hours he galloped at full speed. Some seventy miles from the Shawnee town, his gallant mount began to stumble. Then it fell with the death-rattle in its throat. The Indian and the horse had done what they could. Now the boy must save himself. He ran steadily towards the rising sun, trying to leave a trackless path behind him, turning from a straight course only to seek the shelter of the scattered timber or to dash up the channels of little brooks, so that the savages he knew were seeking him might at least be delayed on their blood-hunt. Now the serried ranks of the Big Woods rose up before him, only a few miles away. Once in them, his chance of escape would be doubled. With a heart that beat as if it would burst, he ran as never before. The prairie was now rolling in long swells towards the forest. As he reached the last "divide"—that is what the prairie-crests are called

in the West of to-day—he glanced back and a groan came from him. Over the divide behind rushed a mounted Indian. As he saw Tom he uttered a wild whoop, beckoned to unseen braves behind him, and sped on. Three hundred yards lay between Tom and the timber. It was impossible to reach it before the Indian would be upon him. What chance had he then, with only the knife Bear-Who-Walks had given him, against his pursuer with tomahawk, knife, and gun?

“He’ll try to take me alive,” thought Tom, “so he won’t shoot. I won’t be taken alive. I’ll fight till he kills me. Better that than to die as Crawford died.”

The Indian caught up with him a scant hundred yards from the forest. He leaped from his panting horse and rushed at the boy, who clutched his knife and awaited the attack. It never came. The sharp crack of a rifle sounded from the woods. The savage, tomahawk in hand, turned slowly in his tracks and fell dead. Tom stood still, dazed.

“Run, run, ye coot, run!”

Zed came leaping and shouting towards him.

Tom ran to him. The trapper caught his outstretched hand, whirled about, and sped toward shelter. Man and boy took the long leaps that had saved them from the Hessians in the flight from Flatbush and that saved them from a far worse foe to-day. Three Indians raced over the divide in time to see the fugitives disappear into the fringe of the Big Woods. With a fierce yell they galloped forward, passing their dead comrade, shrieking for revenge.

A few feet within the timber-line, Zed stopped, caught up the extra rifle he had left there when he ran forward, pressed it into Tom's hands, and rapidly reloaded his own gun.

"Take the devil on the chestnut horse," he said. "I'll answer for the one on the gray. If the third one doesn't stop, we have our knives against his gun."

Both rifles cracked.

The Indian on the gray horse crumpled into a heap on the ground. Tom's unsteady aim found the chestnut stallion, but not the brave upon him. Down went the horse and down behind him the

Indian flung himself, using the dead animal as a cover and driving a bullet to the spot whence Zed and Tom had fired. They were ten feet on one side of it now. The third savage jerked his horse upon its haunches, slid to the ground, and fired across its back. The bullet sped harmlessly by. Zed did not waste shots in that way. His next one tore through horse and man. He seized Tom's rifle then, and as the last living foe left the shelter of the dead stallion, Zed drove a bullet into his shoulder. The way he ran showed it was but a flesh-wound. Zed turned to Tom.

"We mustn't stop to scalp. There'll be others comin'. We must run. Come, boy."

Tom stared at him vacantly. The stress and strain and sleeplessness had been too much for the boy. He sank to the ground.

"I can't run any more, Zed. I'll just stay here. Thank you for coming, Zed. I knew you would. I told Colonel Crawford so. They burned him, Zed. I saw it. You run, Zed. I can't."

His head sank lower still. He had fainted. He came to his senses, drenched with the water the

trapper had thrown upon him, to find Zed on his knees beside him, rubbing him vigorously and pleading with him.

“Tom, Tom, my boy. Think of your mother. Tom, think of your mother. I’ll stay and die with ye, Tom, if ye can’t run, but think of your mother.”

The fine old man had chosen a potent charm with which to conjure back Tom’s courage and strength. The thought of the mother who had given him life gave him life again. With Zed’s help, he climbed slowly to his feet and staggered weakly into the woods. Tom remembered little of the days and nights that followed, and Zed would never talk about them. He had dim memories of trying to stop and lie down; of insisting that he must sleep; of praying for food; of hoping to die. He often leaned upon Zed as they walked, he thought. He half remembered being lifted and held in the trapper’s sinewy arms sometimes as they struggled ahead. Berries were their only food, and few of them. So Zed brought him, half-conscious, on the seventh day, to the banks of the Ohio, where Pittsburgh now flings her flames to the sky and where,

then, the solitary Fort Pitt flaunted the flag of the free. Captain Tom Strong saluted his country's flag and knew nothing more until the fierce fever that fell upon him spent itself. Zed had sat by his rude bed for weeks. With the tenderness of a woman, he nursed "his boy" back to life and health.

While the fever lasted, the Shawnees and Delawares had made the foray Tom had heard planned in the Council Chamber of the Shawnee town. It was Kentucky's bloodiest year. They swept the settlements south of the Ohio, ravaging and slaying. They were beaten off at Brady's Station in August, 1782, where one of the besieged was a baby, named Richard Johnson. Thirty years afterwards, in the War of 1812 with England, he led the Kentucky riflemen at the battle of the Thames, where Tecumseh and Simon Girty, with sixty years of hellish cruelty on his soul, were killed. Now, as they fell back from Brady's Station, several hundred riflemen pursued them and attacked them, against Daniel Boone's advice, at the Blue Licks, August nineteenth. In five minutes the riflemen were

routed, Israel Boone and many others were dead, and Daniel Boone just escaped capture. Others were less fortunate. They furnished savage sport in many a Shawnee town under the placid sunshine of September. But the smoke of their torment did not ascend to heaven in vain.

November 4th, 1782, Colonel George Rogers Clark left the Ohio with 1,050 men. November 10th, he fell like a thunderbolt on the nearest Indian town. He burned the towns of the Indians and the cabins of the British traders almost to the doors of Detroit. He burned the corn and the jerked meat stored away for the coming winter. He recaptured the few remaining captives. He routed the British commandant, who came down from Detroit to drive him back.

As Clark had saved Indiana and Illinois, in 1778, so in 1782 he saved Kentucky by his triumphs in Ohio. The Dark and Bloody Ground became definitely the white man's land.

Meanwhile Zed and Tom were on their eastward way, to join the First Continental Regiment, of which they were captains. The Revolutionary War

had ended at Yorktown, as Alexander Hamilton had told Zed it would end. But the treaty of peace had not yet been signed. Benjamin Franklin and his colleagues were in Paris for that purpose, but the English government dallied and delayed. So Washington and Rochambeau, the gallant Frenchman whose troops made ours irresistible at Yorktown, had their headquarters at Newburgh on the Hudson. The unfurloughed part of our little army was there. The First Continentals were Washington's bodyguard. When Zed reported his and Tom's arrival at Fort Pitt, Captain Pratt and Captain Strong were ordered to rejoin their regiment.

CHAPTER IV

IN the drawing-room of the Hasbrouck house, headquarters at Newburgh, sat General Washington. The room is still to be seen. The old house was built by Jonathan Hasbrouck, Huguenot, whose ancestor had fled from France that he might worship God in the way that seemed fit to him. It was a one-story dwelling, with but seven rooms. The Marquis de Chastellux, who was the General's guest there, wrote: "This house, which is built like a Dutch cabin, is neither vast nor commodious. . . . [The] dining-room . . . has seven doors and a single window." The parlor of the Pierce house, built at Dorchester, Mass., in 1640, has nine doors. The Marquis was, perhaps, prejudiced because he had to sleep on a camp-bed in the drawing-room. This was both office and reception-room for Washington. His brow was dark with care. With him was General Schuyler, the great patroon and gallant gentleman of whom you have read in "Tom

Strong, Washington's Scout." Schuyler had come down the river from Albany to consult with the Commander-in-Chief. The war was over, but troubles worse than war seemed imminent. Congress could not pay off the troops. The only way Congress had to raise money was to entreat the separate States to supply it. Every State had troubles of its own and gave scant heed to such entreaty. The Articles of Confederation, adopted in 1777, which held the thirteen States loosely together, were becoming a rope of sand. The Congress grew more discredited daily. It had been turned out of Independence Hall in Philadelphia by eighty drunken and mutinous soldiers who marched there from Lancaster, defying their officers. Congress had asked protection from the Governor of Pennsylvania and asked in vain. It fled before the eighty mutineers to Princeton. Thence it begged the States for bread for the starving soldiery of Independence and got only a stony silence in answer. There were rumors of revolt at Newburgh. Washington had sternly put by the kingly crown he was urged to take at the hands of his army, but the

wronged and justly discontented troops were being urged to seize upon the government and pay themselves,—urging that was potent when being paid meant being fed. Starving stomachs do not make for cool heads. So Washington and Schuyler spoke of weighty things in low tones and with measured speech.

In the hallway without the drawing-room, things equally weighty to the two persons there were being discussed in gay tones with gay laughter. Colonel Alexander Hamilton, a fine figure in his blue and buff, Washington's favorite aide-de-camp, was wooing Mistress Elizabeth (Betsey) Schuyler, who had come down the river with her stately father, well aware that there were other games than war to play and that Colonel Hamilton played well the game of love. She was looking up at him through demure lashes and shooting arrows at him with her Cupid's bow of a mouth.

“Now that the war is over, is Colonel Alexander, like Alexander the Great, sighing for new worlds to conquer?” said Mistress Betsey.

"In truth I am sighing to conquer a new world," Hamilton ardently answered, "but its queen is far more difficult to conquer than King George was."

"That took five years. Should a queen surrender sooner? Abraham spent seven years, if I remember aright."

"And I shall spend a lifetime if a blessed surrender does not come sooner."

"Ahem!" said a loud voice. Colonel Hamilton, who had his back to the doorway, whirled about. For once in his life, he was not glad to see Zed Pratt, who stood in the door saluting. Behind him was Tom.

"We wuz told to come in and report to ye, Cunnle," said Zed, "but——"

"I was waiting for you, Captain," answered Hamilton, a bit stiffly, while Betsey Schuyler whispered: "Oh, I thought you were waiting on me. As I was so mistaken, it behooves me to retreat—with the honors of war, of course."

"Stay. I wish to present to your Ladyship

Captain Pratt and Captain Strong of the First Continentals. They arrived to-day from the Ohio country, where they have been fighting fiercer savages than even those you know. You will not mind their buckskins. Faith, few of us are dressed so well. Lady Elizabeth Schuyler, Captain Pratt—Captain Strong.”

She swept a wonderful courtesy as the man and boy bowed low to her beauty and to her famous name.

“You may not be interested to know that the two captains saved my life at Yorktown,” began Hamilton, but Zed interrupted.

“Now, Cunnle, ye know ’twas the boy did that. I didn’t do nothin’. Why, ma’am,—I mean Your Ladyship,—the boy here took the whole redoubt——”

“And saved Colonel Hamilton’s life besides! What happiness!”

“Such happiness is yours for the taking. Will you take it?” murmured Hamilton, but with a trill of birdlike laughter and another gracious courtesy

Betsey Schuyler trailed demurely along the paneled hall.

Hamilton's eyes followed her longingly, then turned to the two captains. The longing was now superseded by anxiety.

"The Commander-in-Chief ordered you back because there is trouble in your regiment. He needs you."

Washington needed them! That was indeed great news.

"The General needs us, needs Tom and me? But why? And what's the trouble in the old regiment?"

"The Congress can't pay off the arrears. It can hardly give the men food every other day. Flesh and blood can scarcely stand it. It's no wonder some of the soldiers are mutinous, but if the First Continentals turn against him it will break the General's heart. He is going to talk to the troops to-morrow. Do you both get out among them—you're popular with them—and prepare their minds to stand by the Chief."

"We'll prepare 'em," said Zed.

The two saluted and started to begin their mission.

“Just a minute,” said Hamilton. He gave Tom a beaming, quizzical smile that sent little thrills through the boy. Why did the Colonel look at him that way? What was going to happen?

“Just a minute. Before you go, Captain Strong, you might walk into the dining-room yonder. You may find some one there you know.”

As Tom walked toward the half-open door. Zed whispered:

“His mother?”

Hamilton nodded a smiling “yes.”

Tom had passed through the doorway. There was a great cry, “Mother!” There was a sound of rushing feet. There was a long embrace. And then a woman’s utterly tender voice was heard: “My son, whom God gave. My son, whom God hath brought back to me. Blessed be the name of the Lord, Whose mercy endureth forever.”

Reverently, Hamilton and Zed withdrew.

The morrow was a lovely day. The French

troops, regularly paid by a King beyond the ocean, were kept within their own lines. The Americans, regularly unpaid by their own folk at home, swarmed in disorder to the appointed meeting-place. The gathering was a brilliant bit of strategy on Washington's part. It had been projected by his enemies. The plan was to arrange a meeting, throw off allegiance to both Commander and Congress, and put in power for their own bad purposes the malcontents who had loosed the tempest and thought they could ride the storm. The Chief rode it instead. When he heard of the movement it had progressed so far that a meeting of the discontented was inevitable. It had to be. So Washington called it himself, presided over it, swayed it to his own righteous ends. Never were engineers more neatly hoisted with their own petard than General Gates's staff-officers, Colonel Barber and Major Armstrong, were by this masterly stroke of a masterly man.

The great patriot spoke from the pulpit of the church where the soldiers met. The surroundings

sobered his hearers and the earnestness of the speaker, pleading to them to preserve the nation they had, under his guidance, created, thrilled them through and through. He spoke of Boston and of Lexington, of Long Island and of Saratoga, of Valley Forge and of Yorktown. He painted, now in vivid periods, now in words that halted, their sufferings and their triumphs. With faltering speech, while unaccustomed tears coursed down his cheeks, he spoke of Benedict Arnold. He did not need to point the moral there or adorn the tale. That shaft went straight through to their hearts. They had starved for a hope at Valley Forge. Could not they starve for a glorious certainty now, if need be? It was a manly speech to manly men. The First Continentals, distributed under Zed's and Tom's guidance throughout the church, led in the solemn roar of applause that swept every doubter off his feet and told Washington he had gained yet another great victory. When at the end, he tried to read a letter from a member of the Congress and found the lines of it swam before his eyes, he put on a pair of

great spectacles. It was the first time he had worn them in public. With a rather tremulous smile, he said: "I have grown gray in your service and now find myself growing blind."

Tom leapt to his feet.

"Three cheers for the General!" he cried.

The old church rocked to the sound of the shouting.

The winter passed quietly at Newburgh. Washington waited for the definitive peace that did not come. Rochambeau and his white-uniformed soldiers, their banners spangled with the lilies of Bourbon France, marked time beside him. Sir Guy Carleton and a British garrison held New York. George III was still King on Manhattan Island. Hamilton prospered in his wooing, but Mistress Betsey Schuyler had not yet given her queenly consent. She came to Newburgh whenever her father did, and that was often. She and Mrs. Strong became great friends, partly because each was willing to extol the other's hero. Mrs. Strong would listen

forever to the girl's charming confidences about the man who had won her heart. And Miss Schuyler never wearied of hearing tales of Tom's prowess. She knew, word for word, the story of how he saved Hamilton's life when the redoubt was taken at Yorktown.

One day she knocked at the door of the widow's room in one of the old homes of Newburgh. Two or three officers and their wives occupied most of it. Mrs. Strong was comfortably housed in the attic, with a spare room for Tom when he was off duty. She called "Come in," and rose to receive Miss Schuyler, who took a bundle from the black mammy who had waddled upstairs behind her—there were still slaves in New York—and closed the door upon the maid.

"What is that mighty bundle?" asked the widow.

"Captain Strong's buckskins look as if they were wearing out," answered the girl. "So brave a man should have his uniform. Father has enough buff and blue to clothe a regiment. He vows he'll wear

naught else all his life. So I cut off a few yards——”

“Your Ladyship is most kind,” Mrs. Strong interrupted with formality and finality, “but the Stronges do not accept such presents.”

“As My Ladyship—and sure ’tis most unkind of you to call me by that horrid stiff name; you know my name is Betsey—as My Ladyship well knows, which is the reason Father told me he would sell Captain Strong the horrid cloth and be paid when the Congress pays him. And so I cut off a few yards—and—and——”

Here Betsey Schuyler began to cry, as the simple emotionalism of that day permitted, nay, required “elegant females” to do when their feelings were hurt. Nowadays, under such circumstances, their descendants say sharp things and try to hurt other people’s feelings. The elegant female method is rather the better of the two. Mrs. Strong kissed her and forgave her for having done nothing wrong, and probably herself shed a tear or two before the girl was quite herself again.

You may be sure the cloth was eagerly accepted

on the terms proposed. Cloth was cloth in those days, especially when it was woven for men like Schuyler to wear. When the bundle was unrolled, the widow said:

“There’s enough for two uniforms. Tom doesn’t need two.”

“But Captain Pratt ought to have one, too, oughtn’t he?”

“Ah, my dear, you don’t forget dear old Zed was with Colonel Hamilton, too, that famous night at Yorktown, when God preserved them all, God be praised.”

“God be praised, indeed. It would kill me to have the Colonel die.”

It did not kill her, for when, twenty-two years later, a score of years after she was wedded to him, Hamilton fell on the dueling-ground in Weehawken, with Aaron Burr’s bullet in his great heart, she had to live for the sake of the children she had borne him. Her husband was enshrined in her loyal heart forever. It is chiefly to her that we owe the knowledge that Hamilton wrote the substance of Washington’s famous Farewell Address.

“There’s a splendid tailor in the Connecticut regiment,” said Lady Elizabeth, a moment later. “Send him the cloth and he’ll soon have your captains spick and span as my Colonel.”

“Not a tailor touches the cloth,” said Mistress Strong. “I made every suit Tom ever wore until he got into the army, and I won’t lose a chance like this. Ah, some day you’ll know what it means to a mother to do something for the son she loves.”

Mistress Betsey had her doubts as to her friend’s prowess with the needle, compared to that of the Connecticut tailor, but she wisely held her peace.

Then what scenes in the widow’s attic. Tom was bidden stand here and stand there; he was measured up and down and around and around; feminine tapes were wound about him; sections of a coat, as things progressed, were actually pinned upon him. Never was a bold soldier so completely under feminine domination. She won an equal victory over Zed. She would have none but herself make Zed’s uniform. Zed was her son, too, she declared. Never mind his being twenty-five years older than she was; she didn’t believe it; and if he

was, it made no difference; he was still her son and she was going to make the uniforms of both her boys.

"I wish I could make one for my third son, too," said Mother Strong.

"Your third son? And who is he, Mother mine?" laughed Tom.

"Why, Hans Rolf, of course. You sound like him, for he calls me 'meine mutter.' Don't you remember Hans?"

"Of course we do," shouted Zed. "He saved the boy's life at Fort Washington, ma'am——"

"God bless him," quoth the boy's grateful mother.

"And jined our army after Trenton. The last we saw or heard of Hans, he was marchin' away, talkin' Dutch-English to the boys, with a farm in his haversack."

"And a halter 'round his neck if the British caught him," added Tom

"They never did catch him," his mother answered, "and his farm is near York in Pennsylvania."

“However do you know?”

“Last year, a Hessian who’d been taken prisoner and then exchanged came to our house. He couldn’t talk much English, but he managed to say: ‘Some-dings fer you, leddy. Hans Rolf, he sends it,’ and he handed me the biggest sausage you ever saw!”

“A sausage! Good old Hans! ’Twas a love token, Mother.”

“Hush, you silly boy. You know he always called himself your twin and called me ‘meine mutter.’ Do boys fall in love with their mothers?”

“They’re born in love with them and they stay so,” shouted Tom, and hugged his mother hard.

“Yes, they do fall in love with ’em, Mother Strong, and they stay so,” said Zed, and kissed her hand.

“Well,” said the joint mother, looking fondly at her boys, “I was disappointed that Hans hadn’t written me, and I tried to get some news of him from the other Hessian, but his stock of English had been used up by what he’d said already. So when he was gone, I started to cook the sausage. It was too big to cook all at once, so I cut it in two

—and found a letter in it. Hans says he has a farm and a wife, who talks German, and a baby, and when the war's over he's going to send to Hesse for his real mother, and he wants you and Zed and me to come there and live with him forever and forever and forever."

"Good old Hans"—"Dutchy is a good fellow," said Tom and Zed simultaneously. "We'll sure go 'n' visit old Hans some day," added Zed.

Mrs. Strong went on with her task. She had to climb upon a chair to measure Zed's length, but she overcame every obstacle and turned out two as fine uniforms as Newburgh ever saw. Her two boys in buff and blue were as "trig fra' top to toe" as any John Anderson that ever went courting in Scotland or America. And be it recorded that when the Congress did at last partly pay Tom and Zed, they fully paid the generous Schuyler for the cloth that had changed them from tramps in buckskin to officers in uniform.

There were people in Newburgh who vied with Mrs. Strong in admiration of Tom in his new garb. One of them was a girl with peaches and cream in

her face, love and laughter in her eyes, and gold, not in her pocket, but in a better place, her heart. The Widow Strong liked her, even after she knew Betsey Carhart loved her son,—which is a great deal for a mother to do. The mother knew it, but the son did not. Betsey was two years younger than Tom, from one standpoint, far older from another. The boy liked her, but did not yet dream of more than like. They called each other “Betsey” and “Tom” in the frank fashion of the day, but Tom left her gayly when his country next called him.

The call came soon. The First Continentals and nearly all the rest of the remaining army had been furloughed April 19th, 1783, the eighth anniversary of “the shot heard ’round the world,” the shot fired at Concord and Lexington. Zed, refusing all offers to stay forever with the mother who had adopted him, heard the call of the Wild too strongly to keep longer away from the wilderness. Tom’s bones tingled for days with the bear-hug the trapper gave him in saying “good-by.”

“I’ll be back,” said Zed. “I’ll see ye and the

mother—God bless her—again. But I'll see the Father-of-Waters first. I'll see where the buffalo come from. I'll see the other side of the Mississippi, where one day there'll be great States, States as big as Old Virginia. Do ye s'pose these United States'll stop at that river, howsumever big it be? No, I won't see it, son, but you'll see the flag we fought for cover a country that stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I'm going to the Promised Land. I'm only sixty-seven. There's lots of life in the old trapper yit. I'll be back, son. God bless ye. Good-by."

Then came the bear-hug and the going of Zed. He left Tom lonely. Washington kept him at headquarters and kept him busy there. He saw the Commander-in-Chief often and Colonel Hamilton continually. His mother was near him. Betsey Carhart always welcomed him, though with maidenly reserve. But he was lonely without Zed.

At last the good news came. The treaty of peace was signed at Paris in 1782 and ratified September 3d, 1783. The independence of the United States was acknowledged. A new nation was baptized into

the family of nations. It was a feeble child, but it had room to grow from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, though England held Canada to the north and northwest and Spain owned Florida and all the shores of the Gulf of Mexico to the south and half a continent to the west. It was weeks before Washington at Newburgh and Sir Guy Carleton at New York learned that George the Third had ceased to be King over Manhattan Island. When slow sails brought the news, the white-clad Frenchmen marched to Boston and thence sailed home from the land they had so greatly helped, and the scarlet-clad Englishmen got ready to sail home from New York.

November 24th, 1783, the Van Cortlandt house, at the southern end of what is now Van Cortlandt Park, at Broadway and 242d Street, New York City, was the center of a busy scene. George Washington was there, with a bevy of aides-de-camp, among them Alexander Hamilton and Tom Strong, ready to march into town the next day and take possession of the last bit of anything but frontier soil held by the redcoats in the name of their King.

There were eight hundred Continental troops with him, veterans of five years of fighting and two years of waiting for independence, honor, and peace. Fair women welcomed Washington to the old house,



VAN CORTLANDT HOUSE, BUILT IN 1748

which still stands in its pristine glory, open to every citizen of these United States. It is now an historical museum. You can see in the southwest corner of the second floor the room where Washington slept the night that made the house famous. It is still furnished in part as it was then. It is pleasant to fancy the soldier and statesman sitting late that evening before the great fireplace, study-

ing the glowing embers of the wood fire. Whatever he saw in them of his country's future, whatever he fancied might be her glory in time to come, has been more than realized by the resistless rush of America to imperial strength. The eighteenth century saw our abolition of kingcraft. The nineteenth saw our abolition of slavery. May the twentieth see our abolition of poverty! That is more than a dream of Arcadia. Some day it will surely come to pass.

Just after Washington went upstairs, an orderly said to Tom:

"The General wishes to see you in his bedroom."

Tom followed the orderly. The man tapped on the door, was bidden to enter, and ushered Tom in. Then he himself withdrew.

"Be seated, Captain."

"Your Excellency has done me the honor of sending for me?"

Tom supposed he was to be told to attend to some details of the morrow's march and was rather puzzled at being bidden to sit down. It was an age of ceremonial. Few men sat down when Washington

was in the room; none without being told to do so.

The great patriot looked keenly at the boy whom he had first seen at Nathan Hale's side, on Brooklyn Heights, seven years before.

After a scrutiny which seemed long to its subject, he said:

"What are you going to do with yourself, Captain, now that your country's need of you will no longer take all your time? She will need you always, but not so exclusively as she has while you were passing through your boyhood. Colonel Hamilton tells me he thinks you are not overwell provided with worldly gear."

The boy smiled as if in gay defiance of the world from which he had to wring his future.

"My mother owns our little home on Broad Street, and has a tiny income of her own, barely enough for her modest wants. I don't know what I shall do, General, but I guess I won't have to beg. I'm ready to work hard, and Zed—I beg Your Excellency's pardon, I mean Captain Zedediah Pratt——"

Washington nodded and smiled. "Yes, I know

the old trapper. You and he rowed me across the Hudson after the battle of Long Island. He won his commission at the Cowpens. He dined with me at West Point, when he brought me General Greene's message that took me to Yorktown. Well, my boy, what about your friend 'Zed'?"

"He has taught me to do many things, Your Excellency."

"You have seen something of the West, I know."

Tom bowed.

"In 1753 I went on a mission to the French at Fort du Quesne, now, thank God, our Fort Pitt. I went part way there with poor Braddock in 1755. In 1770, I went down the Ohio as far as the Kana-wha. With me was a man who became my dear and valued friend, Colonel Crawford. You saw him done to death by the Shawnees."

Washington stopped a moment, in honor of the dead. Then he went on calmly:

"Two months ago I went up the Mohawk and Genesee valleys, in New York. It is my purpose, as soon as my affairs are settled at home, to study a route for a canal from the Chesapeake to the

Ohio. I tell you these things because they have impressed me with the belief that the real future of our country will be wrought out beyond the Alleghanies and that our great duty now is to forge strong links between ourselves of the East and the Western folk. We must bind these people to us by a chain that can never be broken. We must have constant communication with them. That communication will be best served by canals and rivers. You will see the Ohio thronged with canal-boats from Baltimore and Philadelphia, perhaps even from New York. But there is to be a means of communication far better than canal-boats. My boy, there will be such things as steamboats, steamboats that can breast the currents of our great rivers and can—going with the currents—make perhaps as much as eight or ten miles an hour! When the steamboat links together the East and the West, there will be no danger of that great region's breaking away from our country's flag."

"A boat moved by steam?" Tom gasped in amazement.

"I have been sure of it ever since James Watt

made his first steam-engine. That was nearly twenty years ago. He began making steam-engines to sell just about as we began making war against his King. Do you know the story of his invention?"

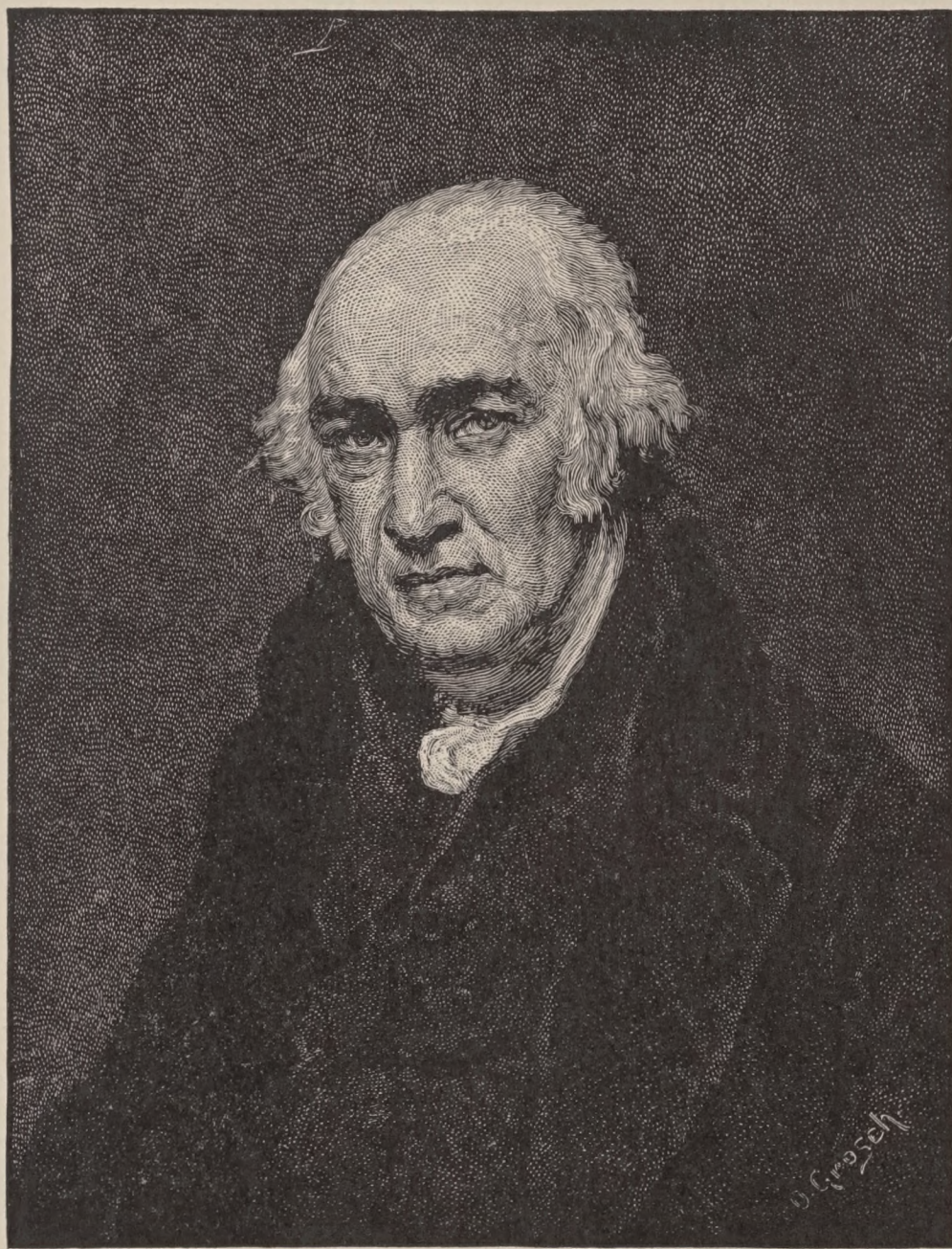
"No, Your Excellency."

"He was a poor boy, a very poor boy. One day, seated in the kitchen of his father's little house, he saw the lid of a kettle in which water was being boiled lift up. He knew it could not lift itself; that something must have lifted it; that whatever did lift it was power. He made up his mind to tame that power and to force it to work for him and other people. And he has done so. James Watt's tea-kettle will yet puff up and down the Hudson and the Delaware, the Ohio and the Mississippi. And it will bind us all together, North and South and East and West, into one great nation that will finally cover the Continent. Do you want to help that binding, Captain Strong?"

"I would do so most gladly, Your Excellency, but how? What can a poor boy like me do to help?"

"There is an ingenious mechanic named Rum-

sey—James Rumsey—at the little settlement of Shepherdstown on the Potomac, not a great many



JAMES WATT

miles from Mt. Vernon,” Washington answered.
“He has been trying for two years to perfect a

steam-driven boat and he thinks he is near success. I have helped him with a little money from time to time—though, faith, 'tis little I have had to spare—and now he writes me this.”

He handed a letter to Tom. It was a crude, ill-spelt epistle, full of the fiery hopes of a sanguine inventor. It sketched his experiments, his failures, why he thought he had failed, his belief in coming success. It ended with these words:

“If Your Excellency will back me with some more munney and send a man to spend it on the work—somehow munney slips through my fingers too fast to do any good—I’ll sure succeed. I want a man as can help me otherways too. I dunno why ’tis, General, but there ain’t no man hereabouts that works fer wages that’s wuth a York shillin’ a month.”

“I know why it is,” said Washington. “It is because of slavery. God forgive us for it. A white man won’t work with slaves. He goes away or he slinks around idly. But the black curse will soon be wiped out. Slavery is bound to go and go quickly.”

Nearly all men thought so in those days. There was more abolition sentiment then in Virginia than there was in Massachusetts, where they turned many a disgraceful dollar—they called it a pretty penny—out of stealing men in Africa and selling them in America. It was Stephen Whitney of Connecticut whose invention of the cotton-gin in 1794, eighteen months after he had graduated from Yale, made slavery so profitable to the South that its roots sank too deep for anything but a bloody civil war to tear them up.

Virginia was burdened, not only by slavery, but by lack of schools for the mass of her white population. So far as schools were concerned, the famous saying of Sir William Berkeley, Royal Governor in 1671, still held good. Dull Sir William reported to his dull King: "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years. . . . God keep us from both!"

"Well," said Washington, when Tom had read the letter, "I thought perhaps you might be the man Mr. Rumsey wants. If you care to go to Shepherds-

town, I'll manage to supply the money, enough to try out his plans and to take care of you, with something over to send your mother."

"I thank Your Excellency a thousand times," said Tom. "I can never cease to be proud that you have so kindly thought of me. For myself, I would be glad to go, but I must have my mother's consent. We have been long separated. She could not go to Virginia with me, for she could not bear to leave the house where Father died. I cannot go unless she says so. But go or not, I thank you from my heart. Have I Your Excellency's permission to withdraw?"

"Your mother knows all about it, Captain Strong. I talked to her about it in Newburgh. There were a few tears, but she said she gave you to me in 1776 and she wouldn't take back the gift now, if I still wanted you. And I do. Will you still serve me, Captain?"

"With all my heart, Your Excellency."

Tom Strong rose to his feet and saluted. George Washington held out his hand, saying:

"We are on the verge of being no longer sol-

diers, but civilians both. I wish you success in your new life."

Reverently and gently Tom pressed the extended hand, as he bowed low over it.

"If Zed could see me now, he'd be happy," Tom thought.

CHAPTER V

NOVEMBER 25th, 1783. King George the Third's last day in New York. The British flag fluttered down from the flag-pole in Battery Park. Sir Guy Carleton sailed away with all his men. Citizens who had been good Tories yesterday were frantic lovers of freedom to-day. Twelve thousand steadfast Tories, men, women, and children, a melancholy throng, had sailed from New York two months before, when the last hope that "rebellion" had not spelled "revolution" had failed. Some went to Nova Scotia, some to the West Indies, all to sorrow. With fine spirit most of them, with coward fear some of them, they broke the ties of home for the sake of loyalty to "the King, God bless him," but the breaking hurt.

Just about as the British flag was unfurled for the last time at Battery Park, 119 years after the Dutch flag had given place to the British and New Amsterdam had become New York, there was a

fanfare of trumpets in front of the Van Cortlandt house. Washington came down the steps, followed by his staff in all their sober bravery of blue and buff, albeit with ripples of lace at throat and wrists. Tom's flesh rather resented this unaccustomed finery of lace. It tickled him. But he knew his came from his mother's wedding-gown and he bore it proudly, as became a knight wearing such a favor from the lady of his love. Mistress Betsey Schuyler knew where Alexander Hamilton's lace came from. More of the same sort was hidden away in a "high-boy" in her dressing-room. It was destined to be part of another wedding-gown, her own.

The march began. The trumpeters came first. Then a guard of honor. Then Washington. Then his staff. Then a few cavalry. Then a band that had rattled its drums at Yorktown. Then a phalanx of infantry, veterans all, in blue coats, white waistcoats and breeches.

Through the length of Manhattan Island, most of it a placid country-side with a few great country-seats dominating its gentle hills, the procession came. Liberty rode by Washington's side. At the Battery,

where all the little town had gathered, the troops presented arms; with blare of trumpet and beat of drum the Stars-and-Stripes with only thirteen stars flew to the November breeze; and the band made the echoes ring. There was a little delay, for the English had cut the halyards and greased the pole and left their own flag flying. A certain John van Arsdale stepped out of the Continental ranks. He nailed cleats on the pole, clambered up them, nailed on some more, clambered up again, and so on until he reached the top, cut down the scarlet flag, wove in new halyards, and sent "Old Glory" to the top of the pole.

Washington bestrode his war-horse, stately, splendid, serene. All eyes were fastened upon him. All eyes but two. They were "the widow Strong's." They were fixed with uttermost mother-love upon Washington's youngest aide-de-camp, Captain Tom Strong of the First Continentals.

Nine days later Washington bade farewell to his generals. They had gathered in the "long room" of Fraunces' Tavern, which still stands at the south-

east corner of Broad and Pearl Streets, in the great modern metropolis of New York, as it did then in little old New York. Then it belonged to "Black Sam" Fraunces, a famous cook. Now it belongs



FRAUNCES' TAVERN

From an etching by Wm. Sartain

to the Sons of the Revolution, who have restored it with loving care, and it is still a tavern. To the gathering of the generals came their chief. Some there were there who had hated him and hated him still. Some there were there who had plotted against him. But all of them, enemies and stanch friends alike, felt the majesty of his presence, the kingliness

of his glance, the splendor of his spirit. They came forward, one by one, to take his hand, to say good-by. Memories of many a hard-fought field, of victory, of defeat, of privation, of indomitable perseverance, of almost superhuman strength, were in those handclasps. Tom, who was to go South with the Chief, watched the historic scene from the doorway. The generals formed in two lines. Washington passed between them and descended to the street, where again all New York had gathered, as it had at the Battery nine days before. There was sober cheering from the saddened throng. Women wept. More than one veteran found his eyes grow dim. The great man entered a barge at the foot of Whitehall Street. Ten ship's-captains pulled the oars. Tom, at the bow, looked back past his General's graven face to the shore. It was black with people, but of them all he saw only his mother, waving with a tear-stained handkerchief a fond farewell to her boy. New York and Virginia were far further apart then than New York and Oregon are now. New York was about ten days away from Boston. Though the stage-coach that ran between the two

cities started at 3 A.M. and stopped only at 10 P.M., it made but forty miles in those nineteen hours. Even that was remarkable, in view of the condition of the roads. If such was the case in a comparatively thickly-settled community like New England, imagination fails to paint the badness of the highways south of Philadelphia. High postage made letters a luxury beyond the reach of the poor and the mails were irregular and uncertain. A journey was a serious undertaking then. There is not much exaggeration in Washington Irving's story of the Dutch merchant leaving New York for Albany, who had prayers offered in the churches for his safe arrival. Tom had gone to a far country. His mother was right in thinking that and it made her sad. But the greatest of Americans had wanted her boy and taken him with him. That made her glad.

The little party rode across New Jersey to Philadelphia, where Washington rendered his accounts for the whole war to the treasurer of the Congress. He had always declined to receive any pay, and he had advanced for public purposes from his own purse \$64,315, a great sum in those primitive days.

The peripatetic Congress was then in session at Annapolis, Maryland. That was the next stop. The body that had commissioned him was now to receive back the powers it had bestowed. At noon of December 23d, 1783, a hush fell upon the crowded room. Washington entered. In a few manly and simple words he offered his resignation. The president of Congress was General Mifflin, who had made the dark days of Valley Forge still darker by conspiring with General Gates to have the Commander-in-Chief removed from his position. It was now Mifflin's duty to receive in time of utter victory the voluntary resignation of the great general whose resignation he had sought to force in time of disaster. He rose to the occasion when he said: "You retire from the theater of action with the blessings of your fellow-citizens, but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command. It will continue to animate remotest ages." The greatest of our American mural painters, Mr. Edwin H. Blashfield, has glorified the walls of the Baltimore Courthouse with a symbolic picture of the scene at Annapolis.



WASHINGTON RESIGNING AT ANNAPOLIS

Reproduced by permission from the painting by E. H. Blashfield. Photograph copyright, 1903, by J. W. Schaefer.

The next day, on Christmas Eve, 1783, Washington was at last at Mount Vernon, the first time he had been there, save for one hurried visit, since he rode away, in 1775, to take command of the "rebel" troops that then beleaguered Boston-town.

From Annapolis Tom had ridden straight towards Shepherdstown. In one of his saddle-bags he carried a purse of money, and in one of his pockets a letter to James Rumsey. Washington had given him both. The money was for the experiments. It was all in English sovereigns. The English sovereign had survived the English King on American soil. There was practically no American money. The Continental currency had ceased to circulate. There were a few silver coins struck by the different States and a mass of dirty bits of paper issued by the different States. The only certain thing about their value was that they would be worth less next week than they were this. A motley mass of foreign coins was in use. There were fourpence-halfpennies, sixpences, pistareens, picayunes, pips, johannes or joes, doubloons, moidores, pistoles, sovereigns, guineas, ducats, and chequins. Tobacco

was currency in Virginia. Prices were sometimes stated in salt-pork in Massachusetts. In the "State of Franklin," which tried to establish itself in part of what is now Tennessee, the first legislature enacted, in 1784, a legal-tender law. A pound of sugar equaled one shilling; a raccoon or fox skin, one shilling and threepence; a gallon of rye whisky, two shillings and sixpence; a gallon of peach brandy or a yard of good linen, three shillings; and a clean beaver-skin, otter-, or deerskin six shillings. The legal-tender furs passed from hand to hand in little bales, so ingenious criminals counterfeited otter-skins by sewing tails upon raccoon-skins. Nevertheless the Franklin currency lasted longer than the State that made it lawful.

Shepherdstown was a small settlement on the banks of the Potomac, in Virginia. It has quite vanished from the map now, though James Rumsey almost immortalized it. He came near launching there the first practicable steamboat. Tom approached it on a rainy day. His horse could scarcely stagger through the mudholes in the barbaric roads. Many a Virginian was called by his admirers "the noblest

Roman of them all," but the meanest Roman of them all would have been ashamed of the roads of Virginia. Twice Tom had had to wait for hours until a roaring stream became placid enough to swim his horse across it. The fords were dangerous and the bridges few. Tom and his horse were soaked with water and splashed with yellow mud from head to foot when he drew near a small settlement. It was not a cheerful spot on that day of wintry rain. It consisted of a store and two residences, all unpainted, all apparently kept from tumbling down only by a kind Providence, all utterly shabby. The largest and the shabbiest was nearest. Tom drew rein there. It was a two-story house, with a wide porch running across its whole front. It sagged towards the ground. There were no gutters and it shed rain from every inch of its crazy roof. A few of the windows had small panes of glass. Others had greased paper, the backwoods substitute for glass. Others had rags stuffed into the broken frames. A tall man in shiny small-clothes that had once been fine and in a coat so worn and patched that its original color could only

be guessed at, was sitting on a tumbledown chair on the porch, his rusty cowskin boots resting on the tottering balustrade, a cue tied with a faded ribbon showing under his coonskin cap, a corncob pipe between his teeth. He rose slowly as Tom stopped. When he took his feet from the crazy railing, part of it fell.

“Will you kindly tell me where I can find——”

“Howdy, stranger, howdy?” said the tall man, heartily. “Don’t stay out there in the rain askin’ questions! Come in, stranger. I sure am glad to see you. Howdy? Ephraim’ll take your horse. Ephraim! Now, where is that fool darky? Ephraim!”

“Comin’, massa.”

An old negro, a study in rags, came bowing and smiling around the corner of the house.

“Here I be, massa. I’ll take the gemman’s hoss. Light down, Cunnle, won’t ye?”

He took the reins as they fell from Tom’s cold fingers, helped him as he stiffly dismounted, and possessed himself of the saddlebags. And all the time he grinned delightedly, as if this were the

finest day, and the stranger's arrival the greatest event, and himself the happiest person in the whole wide world. Ephraim shed happiness about him as the sun sheds light and heat. Somehow Tom felt his weary heart grow lighter.

By this time, his host was shaking him warmly by the hand, upon the porch, repeating again and again: "Colonel, you sure are welcome to Liberty Hall."

"You are most kind, sir. I want to find——"

"We'll find him for you, we'll find him. Come right in. We'll have a blazin' fire in a minute. Ephraim!"

"Yes, massa."

"You leave that horse stand a bit and make up a big fire."

"I'll have to chop kindlin', massa. There ain't none."

"Nonsense. We can't wait for that. The gentleman's cold. Here, pick up those pieces." He pointed to the fallen rail. "They'll make good kindlin'. And, Ephraim, I've told you every day for a year that railin' was bound to fall. If you don't

fix it to-morrow, I'll skin you alive, Ephraim, d'ye hear?" He smiled a cherubic smile at the old negro, who had heard that threat too many times to dread it.

The fire was made in the great fireplace of a wide hall that ran through the house and was evidently a general living-room. With some difficulty an unbroken chair was found for the welcome guest. When his outer garments had been hung up to dry, when hot coffee had been supplied, and when old Ephraim had toddled off to care for the horse, his host let Tom talk.

"You said, sah, you wanted to find——"

"A place called Shepherdstown and a gentleman named James Rumsey."

"Well, this is luck, stranger. This is Shepherdstown and I'm James Rumsey. You'll stay with me a while, won't you? If it's business that brings you, wait till you're rested up. A few days'll make you right as a trivet. Travelin' in old Virginia is tol'able hard work, that's what it is."

"I have a letter for you, Mr. Rumsey."

"Well, now, that's a surprise. Letters are

scarcer'n hens' teeth in Shepherdstown. It was kind o' you to bring it, Colonel——"

"I'm only a captain, Mr. Rumsey, and not that, now. I'm Tom Strong."

"Oh, since the wah, sah, we are all brevet colonels in Virginia. I saw little fighting myself, Colonel Strong,—just toted about a gun a bit and fired when I saw somethin' red. The only real battle I was ever in was the Cowpens."

"The Cowpens? I was there, too."

"Then we've fought and bled together. What were you with?"

"The cavalry. And you, Mr. Rumsey?"

"I was a high-private in the infantry, the militia. I guess we'd have all run if it hadn't been for a long Yankee named Zed Pratt."

"He's my dearest friend."

"Shake again, Colonel Strong. We made him a captain on the field. Were you a captain then?"

"No, my captaincy came at Yorktown."

"You don't say. Why, then you've seen General Washington."

"I've served on his staff. This letter is from him."

Tom held out the letter. Rumsey took it and read it. Then he read it again. Then he said:

"There never was such a man as the General. I just know I can make a steamboat. All my friends allow I'm plumb crazy. They've dropped away from me. All the men I've borrowed money from to build the boat act like they thought I'd robbed 'em. All but one. That's Washington. Here he says he's sent you to help me and he's given you money to carry on the work. Well, Colonel, we'll turn the trick. Do you know much about mechanics?"

"Very little, but I'm a handy man with any kind of tool."

"Supper's ready, massa," Ephraim announced.

There were chickens and cornpone and potatoes on the table. Presently there was nothing. Tom's mighty appetite, well seconded by Rumsey's, swept the board. Ephraim chuckled to see them eat. Then, having already been hostler, handy-man, cook, and butler, he turned hostler again and went out to

see that the guest's horse was treated as a guest too.

After supper, Rumsey produced some rough drawings of his invention, over which both men pored long. Rumsey had never seen a steam-engine. Few men had at that time. But he had read of steam-engines, and he had finally made one. He explained that his theory was to suck in water at the bow and expel it at the stern and thus make his boat move forward. The idea, probably original with Rumsey, has been tried again and again, even in quite recent times, but it has never been a success. It was of course long before the time of the screw propeller, but John Fitch, in Philadelphia, already had paddle-wheels in his head. So he was to that extent ahead of Rumsey. A side-wheel steamship, the "Savannah," made the first transatlantic voyage, from Savannah to London, in 1819. When she ran into a storm, she lifted her paddle-wheels out of the water and relied upon her sails. Side-wheelers were the only transatlantic liners down to a date within the memory of many. When the drawings had been well studied, Rumsey bellowed:

“Ephraim!” The old negro appeared with his perennial smile.

“Ephraim, light Colonel Strong to bed.”

A pewter candlestick and a tallow-dip were produced.

“What do you mean, you old scoundrel, giving the Colonel a tallow-dip? Bring a wax-candle and be quick about it, or I’ll skin you alive.”

“Massa, you dun gib all our wax-candles for that last lot o’ wire, sah.”

“So I did, Ephraim, so I did. The fact is, Colonel,” he turned to Tom, “money has been powerful sca’ce with me lately and when the boat needed somethin’, I just bo’t it with whatever was handy. Yes, I traded the wax-candles for wire. Ephraim’s right. Blame you, you old darky, you gen’ally are right. Well, Colonel, you won’t mind a tallow-dip just now. We’ll go to bed with a hundred wax-candles apiece, if we want to, when the ‘Liberty’ once gets goin’.”

“So the boat’s named ‘Liberty,’ is she? I like that. And, Mr. Rumsey,”—the man and boy had

taken to each other from the first moment—"won't you remember I'm named 'Tom'?"

"Yes, I will, my boy. Good-night, Tom."

"Dis way, Cunnle Tom," chuckled Ephraim. He lighted the way upstairs to a vast room, where Tom slept the sleep of a healthy, tired boy.

He was up bright and early the next morning, eager to work, proud to think that Washington had chosen him for this task and had shown him how success in it would help in the upbuilding of the new nation Washington had made. He found, rather to his horror, that Mr. Rumsey's breakfast hour was nine o'clock. Ephraim explained that his master worked so hard he had to sleep late. So Tom went down to the river to look at the "Liberty." She lay on the shore, a flat-boat, about forty feet long, with a rude steam-pump mounted amidships. Tubes ran forward to suck in the water, and back to expel it. They were old stove-pipes. Everything about the machinery was old. It was a collection of odds and ends, wonderfully and fearfully fastened together with wire and with rope. Yet as a beginning it looked hopeful. Tom had not

handled axe and saw, hammer and chisel, knife and adze in vain. He was a self-taught mechanic, but a good one. He saw possibilities in what the neighborhood called "Rumsey's Folly." He was still studying the rattletrap device when he heard Ephraim's smiling call:

"Breakfus' dun ready, Cunnle Tom."

Rumsey's good-morning greeting was as warm and as welcome as the breakfast. Later they went down to the boat together. Tom asked many questions and Rumsey could answer some of them. Then they fell heartily to work. At least Tom did. Rumsey's idea of toil was of the Virginian variety. It was a good deal like the New York idea of sitting still. However, under the boy's vigorous hands, the work went on. The "Liberty" shook from stem to stern as he pounded and hammered and tinkered and thumped.

It took a long time, but at last the machinery was as much in order as its queerly-assorted materials permitted. On a beautiful January day in 1785, the whole countryside came to see "Rumsey's Folly" launched. There must have been a hundred people

there, men, women, and children, white and black. The one store of Shepherdstown did a thriving business that day. They all whooped and yelled together as the flatboat was pushed on rollers to the river's edge and then into the water. At least she floated, albeit some of her seams had to be hastily stuffed with anything that came handy, from Ephraim's last towel to Tom's best handkerchief. She was moored a few feet from shore. Then came the getting-up steam, a tedious process. At last, however, all was ready. Rumsey, pale with suspense, put the rude machinery in motion.

"Hi! yi! The dum thing's movin'," shouted a sympathizer.

"Thet's the current, ye goose," said a doubter; "thar ain't no steam a-movin' her."

"'Tis too. She's goin a heap quicker'n the current. The Jeems River never got along that-away."

She was moving more quickly than the current, perhaps a mile an hour quicker. The crazy pump wobbled about and threatened to break to pieces at every stroke. The stove-pipe tubes spouted water

at every joint. With every chance against her, Rumsey's "Liberty" did move over the surface of the James River faster than the current could carry her. Nay, after going downstream half a mile, she was turned about, and with Tom stoking her like mad, she actually made some three hundred yards upstream before half a dozen things broke at once. She was poled back to her starting-place, and met by an enthusiastic throng. Nobody spoke of "Rumsey's Folly" now. It was generally admitted that Colonel Rumsey was "a great man, sah," "the greatest inventor of this or any other age, sah." It was even suggested that he should be sent to the Virginia legislature, which was Shepherdstown's utmost dream of human glory. Rumsey himself sat amid the ruins of his machinery, the happiest man in the world, except Ephraim. Tom was happy, too. He thought that with a change here and a change there, with a real pump and real tubes, the "Liberty" might become a real steam-boat. He saw himself rushing down the Ohio in a craft like her, scaring Indians to death and white men into the woods, the flag of America over him,

perhaps even the Mississippi before him. It was a great day for Tom, too.

Unfortunately no other great days followed for the "Liberty." With Washington's further help in money and help in advice, for the great man rode across the country to see Rumsey and Tom and the "Liberty" more than once, a good pump was gotten and tubes which were less like sieves were obtained. But with everything possible done for her, she never equaled the record of her trial trip. A whole year more of struggle came to naught. Rumsey had to do the hardest thing in the world for a man to do. He had to give up the dream of years, turn his back upon it, turn to other work in no way connected with it. There was gloom in the shabby and sagging old house. Even Ephraim looked as sad as he could,—which was not sad at all.

"Tom, I spent all I had a good while ago, and now I've spent all General Washington gave me and other men lent me. You've made no money out of bein' partner in 'Rumsey's Folly'"—his voice broke here and his fine chin twitched—"but if you

want to go partners on Rumsey's plantation, perhaps you will make some. I've a thousand acres of as good bottom-land as there is anywhere on the James. There ain't any nigger 'cept Ephraim, but we could hire some and make a good crop every year. What d'ye say, Tom?"

"It's a splendid offer, Mr. Rumsey, and I wish I could say yes, but I can't. Mother wouldn't know what to do without me. I must go home, now I can't help you with the boat any more. Don't call it 'Rumsey's Folly' again, please. The last time General Washington was here, Sandy Botetourt called it that before him. Do you know what the General said?"

"No, Tom. What was it?"

"He looked at Sandy and he looked to be about eight feet high. You know what I mean, Mr. Rumsey." Rumsey nodded; anybody who had ever seen Washington deeply moved knew exactly how a great man eight feet high looked. "He said, quite low, but sort of as if he were Moses laying down the law: 'Don't call it "Rumsey's Folly," Mr. Botetourt. Succeed or fail, it is "Rumsey's Glory."' You

ought to have seen Sandy shrink. He wasn't as high as the General's shoe."

Rumsey almost jumped to his feet. Tom had never seen him move so quickly. His gloom vanished. He looked own brother to Ephraim, so far as cheerfulness was concerned.

" ' Rumsey's Glory ' ? The General really said that. Well, I'm paid for everything. ' Rumsey's Glory.' Tom, just think of having the greatest man in the world say that. Ephraim! Come here, you fool nigger, and hear what Colonel Tom heard General Washington say."

Master and man rejoiced together over " Rumsey's Glory."

The master wrote Washington that night: " I have quite convinced myself that boats may be made to go against the current of the Mississippi or Ohio . . . from 60 to 100 miles a day."

Now Rumsey was speaking to the boy-captain:

" Tom, you said your mother wanted you home with her. Well, now, Tom you've told me a lot about your mother. Every day we've been together, you've talked about her. I feel as if I knew the lady

right well. And a lady that's brought up a son like you is the kind of lady I like and the kind I could love at sight. Now, Tom, honest, if I should spruce up and go to New York and offer your mother my heart and hand—it's a good heart and a clean hand, my boy—and—and—the thousand acres of bottom-land, don't you think she might marry me and come here and make it home for both of us?"

"Any woman ought to be proud to get that heart and hand," Tom gently answered; "but Mother'll never marry again. She lives for Father to-day just as much as she does for me,—and that's all the time. She'd like you, Colonel, down to the ground, but she wouldn't marry you."

"There's another dream gone then. I'd hoped you'd say different. Well, Tom, if I can't be your partner and can't be your father, there's one thing I can be, and that's your friend, forever. And here's my hand on it."

So Tom had made another lifelong friend. It was an excellent habit of his. He made friends, not because he was lucky, but because he was a compound of sunshine and strength. Make yourself

into such a boy and you will never lack for friends.

Rumsey's friendship lasted to the end of that good man's life and beyond, for when the end came, Tom found himself the heir of all Rumsey had, the thousand acres of bottom-land, which he sold at a good price, and old Ephraim, whom he indignantly refused to sell at any price. Instead he took him back to New York with him, where Ephraim lived, with another colored man named Jim, to an incredible age, worshiping his "Cunnle Tom" and adoring a certain Tom Strong, junior, who had arrived in New York before Ephraim did, and whom Captain Tom Strong and his wife, Mistress Betsey Strong, thought quite the finest boy in the world. But that is another story. Perhaps I shall some day tell it.

While Rumsey was experimenting with his suction steamboat, other men were experimenting on other types. Every great invention is made by different men at about the same time. It is "in the air" and more than one strong hand clutches it and brings it down to earth, for man's betterment. It

was by only a scant majority that the United States Supreme Court decided that the Bell telephone was not Daniel Drawbaugh's telephone. So in steamboats. Jouffroi steamed down the Saône in France, and John Fitch up the Delaware in Philadelphia, soon after Rumsey pumped his boat up the James. Before 1790 a steamboat company was organized in Philadelphia with a capital of \$800, to run a Fitch boat between that city and Trenton. Fitch had a toy-boat running about 1785. He asked Congress for aid, which was refused. Then he asked Gardoqui, the Spanish Minister to this country. Gardoqui offered him on behalf of the Spanish King all the money he needed if he would give the King a monopoly of the invention. Fitch, poor, in debt, harassed, refused to do this, saying, with a fine patriotism: "If there be any glory and profit in the invention, my countrymen shall have the whole of it." Before 1800, Samuel Morey had gone up the Connecticut River by steam, and Elijah Ormsbee had navigated by steam the Seekonk River in Rhode Island, between Providence and Pawtucket. Soon afterwards one of the New Jersey Stevenses put

a steam-engine, made by Boulton & Watt, of Manchester, on a boat on the Hudson, and Oliver Evans went to and fro by steam on the Schuylkill and the Delaware. Finally, in 1807, the era of steam-navigation really began when the "Clermont" took Fulton from New York to Albany, while scared farmers fled from the river, shouting: "A devil is walking on the water." Honor to them all, but none the less honor to forgotten James Rumsey of vanished Shepherdstown. He dreamed the dream men more fortunate, but not greater, put into practical effect.

Rumsey was about to say good-by to Tom, when a spruce young negro, in the Washington livery, galloped up to the house, dismounted, bowed profoundly, and said:

"Good-evenin', gemmen. A letter for Captain Strong, sah, from General Washington, sah."

Here is the letter. Imagine its now yellowed page (it is still an heirloom in the Strong family) folded envelopewise, for this was before envelopes were in common use, sealed with wax with the Washington

coat-of-arms (which probably suggested the design of our flag), and addressed:

“ These

To Captain Thomas Strong,

At Mr. James Rumsey's House,

Shepherdstown.”

Within it said:

“ CAPTAIN THOMAS STRONG,
Shepherdstown.

Sir:

If you will have the kindness to come to Mt. Vernon, at such early time as may befit your convenience, you will confer a favor upon, sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON.”

That night, guided by the young negro, Tom Strong, saddlebags packed and heart aglow with the joy of having been summoned by his “obedient humble servant, G. Washington,” galloped away.

Rumsey watched his departure sadly and for once in his life even Ephraim forgot to smile. Both of them loved Tom.

CHAPTER VI

MOUNT VERNON is a long house of two rather low stories and a gabled attic. A piazza with columns two-stories high runs across the



MOUNT VERNON

front. It was used as an outdoor sitting-room. Washington's accounts show that he bought thirty "Winsor chairs" for it. Behind are several small buildings, storehouses, servants' quarters, etc. In

front is the broad Potomac. The house stands upon a gentle hill. It was built by Lawrence Washington, half-brother of George, to whom Lawrence left it by his will, as he did the many broad acres in which the stately manor-house is set. There is a story that George, who was an athlete, once threw a dollar across the Potomac here. The feat is impossible, but when a diplomat said so in 1878 to William M. Evarts, then Secretary of State, Mr. Evarts dryly replied: "A dollar went farther in those days than it does now." Perhaps the first wave of the great flood of women's work outside the home that is doing so many things for our country to-day was when a voluntary association of women bought Mount Vernon just before the Civil War of 1861-1865 and dedicated it to public use forever. The house and grounds are kept in perfect condition. The old furniture has been bought back from sundry owners and put in its old places, as far as possible. The home-makers of America have saved for us all the home of the greatest American. It gets its name from stout old Admiral Vernon of the British navy. Lawrence Washington served under him at

the siege of Cartagena, in South America, was soundly thrashed with him, and had much admiration for him. Thereupon Lawrence, loyal British subject that he was, gave the Admiral's honored name to his own new seat. In the year before Tom



WASHINGTON'S TOMB

first saw it, that is, in 1784, George Washington, Lawrence's heir, had as his chief guest there the French Marquis de la Fayette—we call him Lafayette—who had fought under George of America against that English George to whom Lawrence was so loyal.

As you stand on the piazza of Mount Vernon,

looking down to the placid Potomac, you will see a winding path to your right. Follow it and you find yourself upon holy ground, upon the threshold of George Washington's tomb, a small temple built into the green hillside.

During the war between the States, Federal and Confederate armies passed and repassed near Mount Vernon. The countryside was laid waste. But no sacrilegious hand ever touched the tomb or home of Washington.

When Tom rode up to the piazza, the natty groom behind him, a fine young fellow of twenty-two greeted him.

"Welcome to Mount Vernon, Captain Strong. The General bade me represent him, for the moment. He is busy at a conference with some friends within. I am George Augustine Washington, the General's nephew. Let me escort you to your room. Simeon, take the Captain's saddlebags."

One of the three negroes who had followed young Washington out on the piazza took the saddlebags, and Tom was ushered with all the ceremony of those days into the house, up the balustraded

stairway, and into a luxurious room overlooking the river.

“Mrs. Washington bade me say she would be pleased to receive you, when you are ready to descend. I will have the honor of awaiting you at the foot of the stair. I hope you will find Mount Vernon to your liking, Captain Strong.”

“I would be hard to please, were it not so, Mr. Washington, especially after the welcome you have so kindly given me.”

“The General told us much of you at dinner yesterday,” said his young host. “Lady Washington is eager to see ‘the boy-captain.’ That is what the General called you.”

“In Kentucky my name was shorter,” laughed Tom. “Simon Kenton baptized me ‘Boy-Cap’ and the nickname stuck.”

“The General told us of your career there, too. Poor Crawford! The last time he was at Mount Vernon, he had this very room. I looked it up in our guest-book last night. But I must not delay you.”

He bowed and was gone.

When Tom's hasty toilet had been made, he found his friend at the foot of the stairway, and was ushered by him into the room at the left, where a woman, short in stature but in spirit fit mate for Washington, rose to receive him. She had been giving household orders to a bevy of colored maids who stood at one side of the desk where she sat. A notable housewife was Martha Washington. A bunch of storeroom-keys jingled at her girdle as she rose. She did not seem short to Tom, perhaps because her hair, beginning now to be shot through with white, was piled a foot above her head. A woman's coiffure then was as exaggerated as a woman's hat is now.

"Mrs. Washington, I present to you Captain Strong."

Tom bowed profoundly and Mrs. Washington courtesied low, sweeping her long robe dexterously behind her and permitting a glimpse of silver-buckled shoes and silk-clad ankles.

"Welcome, Captain Strong. The General has prepared us to welcome you. Until he can see you, his nephew and I will do what we can to make you

feel at home. I would I might have welcomed your lady mother with you. The General has made me quite jealous with his praises of Mistress Strong."

Now, Martha Washington was rather ruthless in enforcing the rigid rules of social rank in that rigid day, as she showed three years later, in 1789, when she laid down the law for "the presidential court" in New York. Tom shrewdly suspected that "Lady Washington's" welcome of Mistress Strong would have been less hearty than her welcome of Mistress Strong's son, a Continental captain and a favorite of the husband she adored—and sometimes ruled. If the General had a commanding way with him, so, it must be confessed, had the General's wife. But as Tom was quite ready to be her subject, he found favor in the eyes of the somewhat imperious dame. When his audience was over, he left a good impression behind him.

"Will you hunt with me to-morrow morning?" asked young Washington, when they were again alone. "There's a rare good pack of dogs and foxes are easy to find in this country. Or would you rather shoot? 'Tis early for the fishing. Or

would you like a 'possum-hunt? We can have a fine one to-night, in the moonlight."

"I would like them all," said Tom, "but I don't know whether I shall be here to-morrow. Until I have the General's orders, I am at sea. He may send me away this afternoon."

"Faith, we'll try to find out at dinner what his plans are for you. But if my respected uncle doesn't want to tell anything, he won't. Nevertheless, I'll ask him."

The General's conference had been long and apparently weighty. The two men who came out of the room, before Tom was taken into it, had lines of care and doubt on their faces. The General, too, sat brooding when Tom entered, but he rose to his feet with a smile at the sight of the boy-captain.

"Your host is late in greeting his guest, Captain, but I trust my wife and nephew have done what they could for you. Our country's affairs claim my time even more than when I had the honor to command her armies. We must to dinner now, but later I would have you rejoin me in this room. I have much to say to you."

The dinner was at the fashionable hour of 3 P.M. There were but seven at table, the host and hostess, Miss Harriot Washington, the General's niece, his nephew, Tom, and the two gentlemen who had conferred with the General. Tom found out now that the two were Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry. They seemed a bit at odds with each other, more so than was to be explained by the difference in their positions. Jefferson was of the gentry, Henry of the yeomanry, of Virginia. Class-distinctions were graven deep in Virginian life. The Revolution had thrown down some of the barriers, but by no means all. Mrs. Washington, who did much of the carving, in the kindly fashion of the day, pressed repeated helpings upon all her guests, but her manner marked the gulf that lay between Thomas Jefferson, Esq., and Mr. Patrick Henry. She showed little interest in Henry's appetite, but she would have none of Jefferson's denials. Eat much he should, and eat much he did, under his hostess's imperious orders. Miss Harriot had smiled winningly upon Tom, when he was introduced to her. The artillery of her eyes was famous for the execution it did, but

she spared Tom, perhaps as not being big enough game for a girl who was besieged by Virginia planters. She made him feel, however, that she shared in the kindly welcome the family gave him. She would not have been a true daughter of the Old Dominion if she had not. Virginian hospitality in those closing years of the eighteenth century was a most perfect thing.

Young Washington, true to his word, tried to find out whether Tom could share his amusements. Now the General was a thorough Virginian in his love of sport, but he gave no hope of Tom's getting any.

"Captain Strong is on his way home, you know. You would not have him delay seeing his mother a day for the sake of a gallop after a fox."

"Is it his mother the Captain is going to see?" cried Miss Harriot, gayly. "I vow I think some younger eyes are the Captain's beacon. Will you not name your lady-love, Captain, and let us toast her? Is it Madge? or is it——"

"Fie, fie, Harriot," interrupted the majestic Mar-

tha. "Young maids believe a young man thinks only of them."

"Them? Is the Captain contemplating bigamy?"

"Mistress Harriot would make any man a monogamist," said Jefferson.

"And make every man enter the lists for the prize," Henry added, with a rather awkward bow. Lady Washington and Miss Harriot did not look overpleased at the crude compliment. The niece of Washington was not for yeomen's praise.

"We will not venture to detain Captain Strong beyond to-morrow morning. I shall ride with him a few miles. Let the horses be ready at eight, Jeremy."

The majestic butler behind Mrs. Washington's chair bowed his powdered wig in acknowledgment of the command.

"I may ride with you, may I not, General?" asked his nephew.

"I'll ride, too," said his niece.

"Captain Strong and I will have much to say to each other," the host replied. "We must deny our-

selves the pleasure of your company until he next visits Mount Vernon."

The dinner over, Jefferson and Henry departed, but not together, and then Tom followed Washington into the library.

"The country is in a parlous state, Captain," began his host. "We are less united than during the war. The Congress commands no respect and can raise no money. The nation can pay neither its debts nor its daily expenses. Europe jeers at us and expects us to sue to England to govern us again. There are rumors of insurrection. One Daniel Shays is said to be planning a revolt in Massachusetts. The Pennsylvania mountaineers say they will not pay the whisky tax that State is to impose. They threaten armed resistance. Some of our friends in Kentucky talk of a separate confederacy beyond the Alleghanies. They say that if we do not make Spain open the lower Mississippi to their flatboats, they will do so themselves and do it on their own account. We are a nation without a head, without a treasury, without an army. Do you know the strength of our army? There are but

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587 infantry and 71 artillerymen—and that beggarly handful haven't received their beggarly pay for months. What we fought for and won in war, we are losing in peace. Do you not think that we must sink our petty provincial jealousies and create a strong central government?"

"Would Your Excellency abolish State lines?" asked Tom.

"Now God forbid. Virginia must still be Virginia, but she should also be part of a great nation, not of a dying league of discordant communities. The discords have gone far. Why, New York has levied a tariff on every boatload of Connecticut-cut wood and every canoeful of Jersey-grown cabbages. And the Jerseys, in revenge, are taxing New York \$150 a month on the site of a lighthouse she has built on Jersey soil. The United States of America are the derision of mankind."

"You told us once at your table in Newburgh the story of the blind King of Bohemia fighting at the battle of Crécy and of his motto which the English Prince of Wales now bears, 'Ich dien—I serve,'" said Tom. "That is my motto whenever Your

Excellency honors me by letting me serve you."

"I knew you would not fail me."

A long talk followed. Men were of different minds. In Virginia Thomas Jefferson believed as Washington did, but Patrick Henry did not. In New York Alexander Hamilton was heart and soul with his chief, but George Clinton, the idol of the people there, would rather have the loose tie between New York and the other States broken than strengthened, if he had thereby to give up any of the power which as Governor his strong hands had clutched and now held. What Benjamin Franklin thought in Pennsylvania, what Rufus King thought in Massachusetts, Washington did not know. He could not trust to letters to find out. The mails were uncertain and letters were sometimes opened by the wrong people if addressed to a prominent name. John Adams wrote to his wife, August 28th, 1774, from Princeton, two weeks after leaving Boston: "I have not found a single opportunity to write since I left Boston, *excepting by the post*, and I don't choose to write by that conveyance, for fear

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of foul play." Washington wished Tom to find out for him what Franklin and King thought it best to do. Tom jumped at the chance.

Later that afternoon he was taken over part of the estate. It showed everywhere marks of the master's mind. In a day when the planters about him were exhausting their land by forcing it to bear continuous crops of tobacco until it was impoverished, and then continuous crops of corn until it was ruined, while they bought everything they and their slaves consumed, except part of the corn, Washington knew the importance of diversified crops and industries. He grew wheat, flax, hay, clover, buckwheat, potatoes. He made flour. Years before, flour marked "George Washington, Mt. Vernon" had been made free of inspection in West Indian ports. It was sure to be good. He sold herring and shad, the product of the Potomac, and cider and stronger drink, the product of his presses and stills. His looms turned out many yards of cloth, some of it strangely named,—birdseye-diaper, kirsey-wool, barragon, herring-box, and shalloon. His slaves made their own shoes. He

dealt in cordwood. He had sheep and hogs and horses and jackasses—these last a gift from the King of Spain—and mules and cattle. It is true that with 101 cows he sometimes had to buy butter for his own table. His two favorite dishes were salt codfish and honey, the latter from his own beehives.

Mount Vernon was strangely empty the night Tom spent there. It was usually overrun with uninvited guests, not to be denied bed and board under the rules of Virginian hospitality. About this time Washington wrote to his mother: "In truth it may be compared to a well-resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers who are going from north to south or from the south to north do not spend a day or two at it." In 1785, two years after he had become a private citizen, he entered in his diary: "Dined with only Mrs. Washington, which I believe is the first instance of it since my retirement from public life."

There was "a dish of tea" in the evening, after which Mrs. Washington graciously presented Tom with a packet of "Annatipic Pills," which was one

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of her favorite quack medicines. Like every planter's wife she dosed her friends and her slaves. Jalap and rhubarb were the mildest medicines. The strongest have long since vanished from doctors' prescriptions. Washington himself, though he had his stepson vaccinated secretly, when Virginia law forbade vaccination, had his medical foibles. His diary shows that "Joshua Evans put a [metal] ring on Patsey [his stepdaughter] for fits" and that when Mrs. Washington was slightly indisposed he sent for Dr. Laurie to bleed her. The doctor, says the diary, "came here, I may add, drunk," so the bleeding had to be postponed until he was sober again. Bleeding was the great cure-all then. Washington himself probably died (in 1799) of being bled. He had an attack of ague. Three doctors bled him four times. The last time a quart of blood was taken from him. No wonder he died.

The evening ended early. As the clock struck nine, Mrs. Washington rose and said, as she used to say in her crowded parlors in New York, when her husband had become President: "The General al-

ways retires at nine and I usually precede him." Needless to say, Tom retired at nine.

Behold him the next morning, after a seven-o'clock breakfast of ham, eggs, corncakes, honey, and coffee,—a breakfast attended by all the household,—mounted on one of his host's horses, a mounted groom behind him leading his own, and Washington mounted also on the same steed that had carried him from Newburgh to the Van Cortlandt house, and from there to New York eighteen months before, when he thought his task had ended with the raising of our flag at the Battery. He knew better now. His country still had sore need of him.

Mrs. Washington and Miss Harriot gave Tom polite nothings of messages for his mother, and young Washington called out promises of foxes galore when next he came, as the Chief and he started. Through the morning they talked. At noon they lunched at a wayside inn, where Washington gave him letters to Franklin and King, and also made him accept the splendid horse he had ridden that morning.

"There are plenty in my stables," said the wealthy planter. "This one will not be missed. His name is that of his famous sire. On my stable-book he is called Billy-boy."

There was another handclasp. It was the second Washington had given him. Then the General turned back, his groom following him, and Tom fared northward on his own horse, with Billy-boy trailing willingly on a guide-rope behind him.

The night was passed, or rather was begun, at a hotel that was little more than a hut. Tom had reached it just as dusk came. The road forked there. The look of the place did not please him, and the people who came out at his call pleased him still less. They were a villainous-looking white man, with a smirking, cringing manner, and a negro of still worse aspect, sullen as well as servile.

"Light down, young gentleman, light down," said the white man. "The old inn don't look handsome, but the sign says truth." It swung above their heads, weatherbeaten, creaking, Tom thought, the way a gallows would creak. It announced that

the Eagle Inn had "good accommodations for man and beast."

"We can take care of you and your hosses, can't we, Sam?"

"Yes, massa, good care o' bofe of um."

Tom saw an evil glance pass between master and man. He had a presentiment of something wrong. He decided not to stop.

"I called out only to get some directions. Which is the road to Annapolis?"

"Lord o' mussy, stranger, you can't get to Annapolis to-night. It's ten miles and the road's hard to find in the daytime. And the crick's up. There'll be no fording her till to-morrow. You can hear her boom from here."

There was indeed a sound of a swollen stream not far off.

"Where does the other road go to?"

"Oh, it just nachally wanders 'round through the country. It leads to a village 'bout twelve miles off, but, say, they're twelve long miles. Real country miles. You'd be beat out 'fore you reached Greensburg."

“ And there ain’t no place to put up at Greenupsburg, massa,” suggested the negro.

“ Not a sign nor a smell of a place, young master. It’s plain to see you’re a stranger hereabouts, or you wouldn’t be thinkin’ of takin’ *that* road. We’ll fix you fine, won’t we, Sam? ”

“ Yes, massa, fix um fine.” The darky grinned again. His grins were no more like Ephraim’s wide-mouthed smiles than carbolic acid is like spring-water. Tom still hesitated. He had heard tales of strangers disappearing in lonely inns. He thoroughly disliked what he could see of the Eagle and he thoroughly distrusted the innkeeper and his sooty servant. However, there seemed nothing else to do, so he dismounted. As he did so, some guineas in his pocket chinked together. Again master and man eyed each other evilly.

“ Take the young gentleman’s hosses, Sam,” the innkeeper directed.

“ No, I’ll put them up myself,” said Tom. He thought he might as well know the way to the stable and make sure his animals were well fed. Sam went with him, helped unsaddle, and showed him

where to find corn and hay. Then he slipped quietly away. When Tom came into the house, he found the two men whispering together. He caught the words "all three of the boys." The whispering stopped suddenly upon his appearance.

The supper was poor. The white man cooked and served it. The negro had disappeared. When Tom asked where he was to sleep, he was shown a ladder-like stair that led to a hall in the low attic, from which two doors opened. One of these admitted him to his room. It was scantily furnished. There was no door-fastening except a wooden latch, with a chock-block above it, but with a hole nearby through which this could be reached from the outside.

"Good-night," said the innkeeper, setting down the candle he carried. "Hope you'll sleep well. If anybody drops in for a drink to-night, I'll make 'em keep still, so you won't be disturbed. Gen'ally folks do drop in. You may hear 'em talkin'. But nobody'll bother you."

He climbed downstairs. Tom made a noise as if undressing, but he took off nothing but his shoes.

Instead he hung his saddlebags over his shoulders, looked at the priming of his pistol, and tested with his thumb the keenness of the blade of his clasp-knife. It had a razor edge. Then he blew out his candle, lay down noisily on the bed, as a tired-out man might fling himself upon it, and got up at once with the Indian noiselessness he had learned from Zed. He crept to the gable-window of his attic and peered out. The moon was just rising. By its dim light he saw near the stable the negro and three slouching men. They went in long enough to look over the two horses, then came out and joined the innkeeper under Tom's window.

"Good hosses. They'll fetch a big price in Philadelphy. But Sam says the man's got gold on him. Sam heard it chink. We're goin' to have his money as well as his hosses. There's room to bury him where we buried the others. And it's safer. Dead men tell no tales. He's best put away."

Thus the spokesman of the gang.

"All right," answered the innkeeper. "I'll go upstairs and open the door. Let Jim slip in and knife him."

The men entered the house. Then the stairway creaked a bit as two men mounted it. Tom had gone to the door. Two fingers came groping in at the opening, seeking to move the latch. The razor-edged knife flashed in the moonlight. The ends of two fingers dropped into the room. There was a yell of pain outside the door, the sound of two men jumping down the stairway, a hasty shuffling of feet in the room below, a hurried whispering. Then a loud voice was heard.

"Give us your money and the hosses and we'll let you go."

Tom made no answer.

"Honest, we will. If you're 'fraid to speak, drop the money downstairs. We mean to get that, but we ain't so keen on killin' you."

Tom stayed silent.

There was more whispering, then a sound of footsteps. Tom crept to the window. A man was crossing the stableyard to the stable.

"Stop there," shouted the boy; "I'll shoot the first man that touches the stable-door."

The man dodged back into the house. More

whispering. A long wait. Then a fellow ran in zigzags towards the stable. Tom fired. That instant the door to his room was burst open and two white men and Sam rushed at him. The man below had been a decoy, to draw his fire. There was no time to reload his pistol. He flung it with steady aim at the head of the foremost of the gang, and the fellow dropped, stunned and bleeding. But as he raised his knife for a last desperate struggle, Sam's cudgel knocked it out of his hand. The negro and the remaining outlaw sprang upon him and bore him to the floor. He was instantly roped into a helpless bundle. He wondered why he was not instantly killed. It was because the gang had decided to take him part way with them, in order that there might be no tell-tale blood-stains at the Eagle Inn and no possible discovery of a fresh-made grave there. First, however, he was taken downstairs, where the innkeeper, whose right hand was wrapped in a bloody cloth, cursed him horribly. His pockets and his saddle-bags were searched. Their contents were spread upon the table. The money was speedily divided into five

portions. Tom noted that the innkeeper received two of the five and that he tossed one of the stolen guineas to Sam. The letters to Franklin and King gave rise to angry debate. The coats-of-arms upon their waxen seals showed they were Washington's. Their bearer, boy though he was, must be a person of some consequence, for the sake of the letters if not on his own account. Instead of being, as they had thought, a casual stranger who might safely be done away with, it was now evident that his disappearance would cause remark, inquiry, search. Should he be killed and the letters burned? Should he be killed and the letters forwarded by another hand? Should he be ransomed and allowed to carry the letters himself? They debated quite calmly before Tom the question of the advisability of murdering him. The innkeeper was hot for the death of the man who had maimed him for life. Sam sided with his master. The other three were not so sure. The one who had been stunned was nursing a broken head. The one who had been shot had his arm in a sling. They hated the plucky boy, but they feared revenge would be too costly.

Finally a proposition was made. Tom was to be turned loose, without money or horses, but with the letters. He was to take a blood-curdling oath never to inform upon them. If not,—the innkeeper's wolfish eyes told him what would happen then. The boy hesitated. He was ready to lose his life, as he had often risked it during the Revolution, for his duty, but which way did duty lie? He hated to make a bargain with the scoundrels who had him at their mercy, but he had his mother to think of and the trust Washington had laid upon him to fulfil. Finally he said: "Give me an hour to decide."

"You can have just one minute," said the innkeeper, a knife already in his left hand. "*I* wouldn't give you that."

"Shut up, you fool." It was the leader of the gang who spoke. "It'll take us an hour to get ready to start. We must eat first. You go to cookin'."

"Suppose somebody comes."

"Nobody'll come at this hour. 'Twon't be sun-up for a good while yet."

The knife was sheathed with a grumble. The grumbler and Sam began to make a fire in the big brick oven. Tom was gagged and thrust into a closet. He heard the gang-leader say: "I'll bring round the hosses. You two fellows can nurse your head and your arm."

Tom never knew whether he would have agreed or not to their proposal. He did not need to decide, for unexpected help came ere the hour had gone. As his horses were brought to the door other horses galloped up there. A gruff voice said: "You Bill Twigg, what you doin' with them hosses?"

"Bringin' 'em up, sah, for a gentleman that's inside."

"I'll see that gentleman before I take you to jail. I've a warrant here for you and your brothers for stealin' some other hosses. Where be those brothers o' yours? Your wife said as how you'd all come to the Eagle. I bet 'twas for no good. You stand still. Jim, you shoot him if he tries to run. The rest of you come in with me."

It was the sheriff of the county. He and three deputies entered the house. No one was in sight. The innkeeper, Sam, and the two wounded outlaws had fled out of the backdoor before Bill Twigg had answered the first question put to him. There was no man to be seen, but there was one to be heard. Tom, unable to use tongue or arms or legs, was butting his head vigorously against the closet-door. The sheriff was a big man, but he jumped like a deer to the closet. Tom was dragged out. His bonds were cut. There were a few eager questions and the deputies scattered in pursuit of the fugitives. In ten minutes, Bill Twigg, fastened with the same ropes that had bound Tom, was put into the same closet, and the sheriff, Jim, and Tom were eating the food Sam and his master had prepared for the others. Tom made but a pretense of eating. The experiences of the night had not given him an appetite. His story was confirmed by Washington's letters, still lying on the table, and by the guineas a search rescued from Twigg's pocket. Four-fifths of his money had gone, but with the balance, with the letters, with his full saddle-bags, and on Billy-

boy, his own horse following, he left the Eagle Inn soon after the sun rose. It was a beautiful morning. In the bright sunshine, the gloomy drama of the night before seemed but a nightmare. It was fine to be free. Tom whistled merrily as he rode.

CHAPTER VII

TWO days afterwards, Billy-boy stopped with his rider before a modest hotel in Philadelphia. It was the Blue Cow. A signboard bore a picture of that unusual animal. Friend Jonathan Brown, the drab-coated Quaker who owned the hotel, bowed with dignity as Tom came up the piazza-steps, after his horses had been led back by an old negro of miraculous fatness.

“Has thee come to stay, friend?” the proprietor asked.

“For a day or two, at any rate. Is there a room for me?”

“Thee shall be well lodged. Martha!” His daughter, a demure, gray-eyed dove of a girl, appeared. “Thee will take friend——”

“I am Captain Tom Strong.”

“Thee will take friend Thomas—we like not war-like names in the Blue Cow—to the white chamber.”

It was white indeed, that room. Save at his own

home and at Mount Vernon, Tom thought he had never seen such spotless cleanliness. Wainscoting, curtains, and bedspread were dazzlingly white. So were the chair-cushions and the table-cover. The floor, scrubbed till it shone, was strewn with white sand. A black Bible and an old engraving of Moses coming down from Sinai with the commandments, were the only adornments, unless we count as such the brilliantly polished brass andirons on the hearth and the great bunch of dried lavender that shed perfume through the room from the gleaming white mantel-shelf.

“Is there anything thee wishes, friend Thomas?”

“Yes, Miss Martha.”

“Nay, we use not such forms here. Thee may say friend, an’ thee will.”

“I am delighted to find such a friend.” There was a little glint in the gray eyes at this announcement. Tom’s tone had perhaps more than friendship in it. “Now, I want to find your great man, Benjamin Franklin.”

“Thee can find him at Independence Hall. Benjamin sitteth there every day to do justice.”

Tom walked down to Independence Hall. It was easy to find one's way about the checkerboard streets of the Quaker town. They were pleasant streets, shaded by trees, clean with a cleanliness that Dutch traditions had not secured in New York. Red brick houses, with white stone steps and doorways, stood in regimental order side by side. There were many churches. The largest of them were the "meeting-houses" of the Friends. The passers-by strolled along the brick sidewalks. Nobody scurried. Nobody was in a hurry. All was placid calm. As Tom walked, he saw the house whence he and Zed had hoped to kidnap General Howe. With quickening pulses he passed the Shippen mansion, where the trapper and he had been trapped by a springlock; had played at being ghosts to scare the burly Cunningham; and had been rescued by the ready wit of Mistress Peggy Shippen.

The President of Pennsylvania had little power and no pomp. Tom went past unguarded doors up unpoliced stairways to the unwatched "President's Chamber" on the second floor. The door was ajar. Within, at a flat desk, sat a man in his eightieth

year, with a long, good-humored face, a firm mouth, large nose, twinkling eyes under beetling eyebrows, and white hair falling upon his shoulders. He wore a well-cut suit of brown cloth, flowing coat, long waistcoat and knee-breeches, silk stockings, and silver-buckled shoes. Benjamin Franklin was not too much of a philosopher to escape vanity. Always affecting humility that he might be exalted, he was as well aware of his personal importance as of his personal appearance. He had Biblical authority for "delighting in the legs of a man," even if those legs happened to be his own. He was looking at their silk-clad curves when Tom entered. Also he was listening to a portly person who seemed to be laying down the law to him. As that was Franklin's own rôle, he was probably bored, but he did not show it. On the contrary, he was to all appearances respectfully absorbed in what was being said to him. When the talk had ended and the visitor had bowed himself out, the President of Pennsylvania called in a secretary, handed him the memorial upon which the oration had been based, and told him to write to Mr. Morris in a week that the

President had carefully considered for several days his admirably-put arguments and regretted that he did not feel free to change his views. Then he turned to Tom, who had been standing on the threshold.

“How can I serve you, young sir? Have I the pleasure of knowing you?”

“I have never had the honor of being presented to Mr. Franklin, but I bring with me credentials from General Washington.”

He laid the letter on the flat desk. Franklin bade him be seated. The seal was then broken and the letter read. It was reread. It was reread again.

“Do you know the contents of the letter you have brought?”

“The General did me the honor to read it to me before sealing it. I remember he spoke of Your Excellency’s being able to confide in me—if you chose to do so. The General bade me say to you that I was taking a letter of similar tenor to Mr. Rufus King, of Newburyport and Boston.”

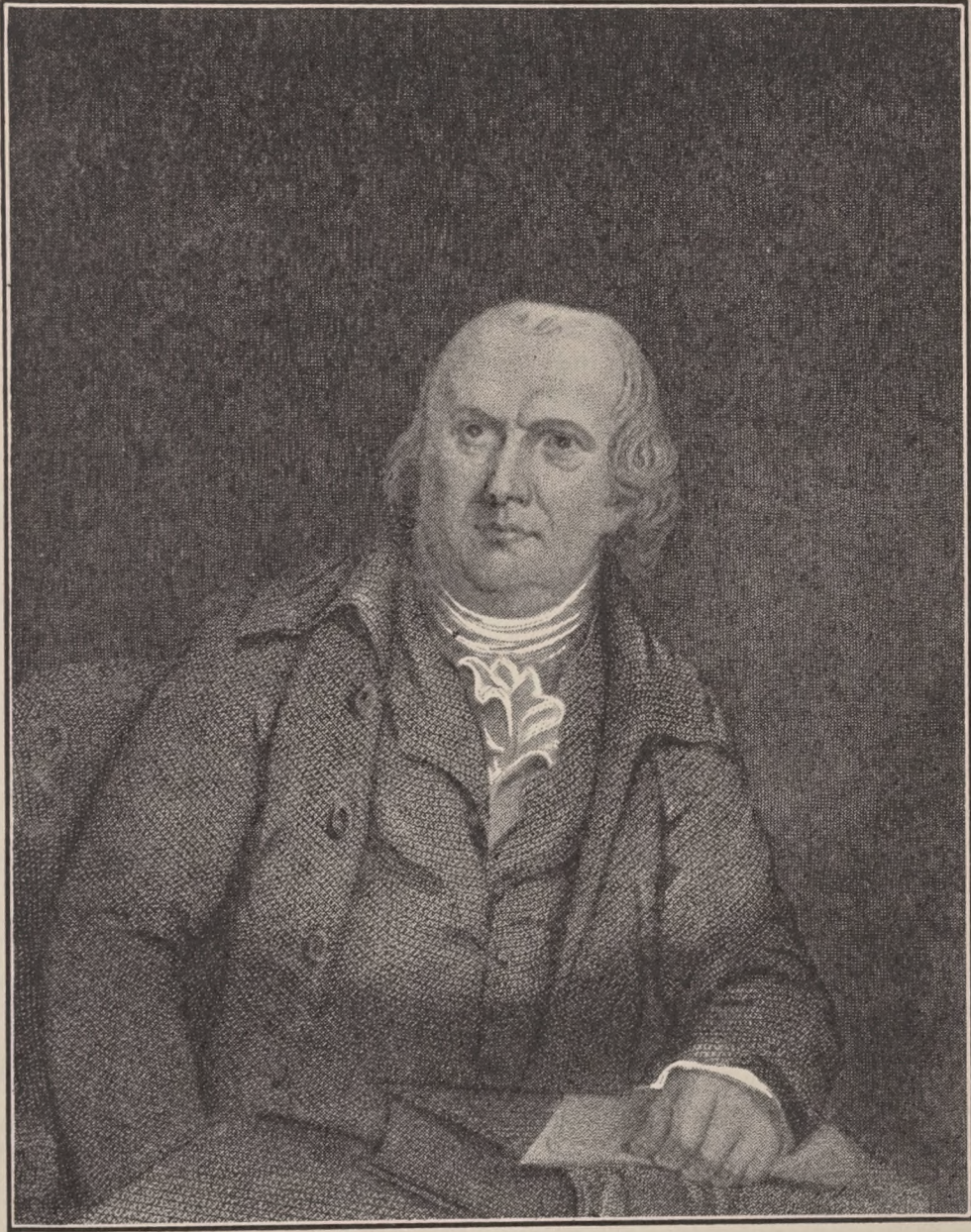
“General Washington dreams well,” said Franklin, tapping the letter with the great horn spec-

tacles he had taken off his nose. "He dreams well. But I fear his dreams will go by contraries. We must think whether they can be made reality. We must think hard. What has he said to you on this theme?"

Tom repeated the General's talk as well as he could. Franklin seemed impressed both by Jefferson's adhesion and Patrick Henry's opposition. His eyes twinkled at the mention of the possible "Whisky War." He explained to Tom that if the mountaineers did fight for untaxed whisky, the fighting would not last long and it would scare Pennsylvania and probably other States into wanting a stronger government.

"The gentleman who was speaking to me when you came in," he said to Tom, "is Mr. Robert Morris, the financial genius of the Revolution, but not, unfortunately, of his own affairs. I hear he is near a debtor's prison. But that is neither here nor there." Morris's imprisonment for debt soon afterwards was a shame to the country to which he had lent his private fortune, and a shame as well to Franklin, but the frugal philosopher rose above

such things. He smiled shrewdly, too shrewdly, Tom thought, as he went on to say: "Mr. Morris



ROBERT MORRIS

would have us not impose the whisky tax and prevent the threatened war. I did not tell him so, but methinks a little blood-letting in the Alleghanies may

stimulate the whole body-politic along the seaboard from Boston Bay to the Savannah River. So I think we will have that Whisky War, Captain Strong. A man who cannot pay his own debts should not try to advise a statesman,—even as humble a public servant as I am.”

He put on his spectacles and read the letter again.

“I will give you an answer as you return from Boston.”

“Perhaps Your Excellency will tell me something now that I can repeat to Mr. King. I know he would value Your Excellency’s views.”

“Did General Washington tell you to say that to me?”

“’Tis but a chance suggestion of mine own.”

“I thought it came from an older head. ’Tis good diplomacy. Well, Captain Strong, the late Commander-in-Chief says you can be trusted and I will trust you. Tell him—and tell Mr. King, too—that I am with them heart and soul. I say ‘them,’ because I believe Rufus King will stand with Washington. But tell them we must move indirectly. We can get a strong central government

only by calling a constitutional convention. The States will be afraid of that and so Congress will not call it. Let us have a commercial convention—nominally,—something to do with taxes or trade. Let it grow into a constitutional one. This is only for your ear, young sir, for yours and Mr. King's and General Washington's. I will have my letter to him ready when you return."

The boy bowed and withdrew. The next morning he bade adieu to "Friend Martha" and her father. Four days later, he rode into Elizabethport and took the ferry for his home. One flatboat per day carried the whole traffic between Philadelphia, New Jersey, and New York.

A low, fat house, with a high-gabled attic that fronted on Broad Street, New York. The house had a little stoop, with a seat on each side of it. The door was cut in two, so the upper half could be opened and the lower still left shut. The door-knob and the great knocker were of brass, polished into the sheen of gold. On this summer morning flowers were blooming in the little yard. Every-

thing in and about the house was spick and span. It looked like a home. It was a home, Tom Strong's home.

Tom had left his horses nearby, after they and he had been ferried across the Hudson. Saddlebags on his arm, he walked up Broad Street from the waterfront. His springy steps rhymed to what his beating heart was saying: "Home, sweet home." He hurried from gateway to door, opened that, and rushed into the living-room that ran across the front of the house. His mother, seated at her sewing, rose in wild amazement.

"Tom, is it really you?"

It really was he. Words, kisses, and hugs convinced her. He had written her from Mount Vernon of his coming, but his letter had not reached her. It was a way letters had in those days. This is one reason why Washington preferred Tom as a letter-carrier.

Seven blissful days mother and son spent together. Her life had flowed on in the cheerful monotony of doing good to everybody her life touched. She had heard again from Hans Rolf.

Now that there was peace and he ran no further risk of exchanging his Pennsylvania farm for an English scaffold, he no longer hid his letters in sausages. His mother was to start from Hesse ere long. He was to meet her in New York. Then he would see "Mutter Strong" and "mein twin Tom." If they and Zed wouldn't come to live with him, wouldn't they all come and make him a little visit, say six months or a year? From Zed, too, had come a characteristic message in the shape of a glossy beaver's skin. Trapped in the far Northwest of that day, now the Middle West, it had been carried by strange hands, Indian, French, frontiersman, in strange ways, by dog-sledge, by canoe, by creaking ox-cart, until it reached New York and Mrs. Strong. It was wrapped about a letter such as she had never seen. For the letter was on birchbark instead of on paper, and had been written with the juice of some shrub instead of with ink.

"There's plenty of beaver," Zed wrote, "they're thicker than the Injuns. When I get off my pack of pelts, then, if I've kept my own scalp from the redskins, I'm goin' West, 'way West. The further I

go, the better I like it. A man can breathe on the prairies. I'm comin' back to see ye, Mother Strong, and those other two sons of yours, but don't blame me if I get Tom and Hans to head West with me afterwards. This is God's country."

Unlike his mother's, Tom's life had been in strange places. Philadelphia, Annapolis, Shepherdstown, Mount Vernon became more than names to her as Tom made vivid pictures of what he had seen and done in them. She worshiped Washington and admired Franklin, but she liked best Tom's tales about Rumsey. The quaintness, the oddity, and the niceness of the man who had dreamed a great dream in the Virginia wilderness and had faced so manfully the dream's not coming true appealed to her.

"I almost love your Mr. Rumsey," she said once.

"You could quite love *your* Mr. Rumsey, if you wanted to," laughed Tom. Then he told her of Rumsey's whilom hope of marrying her, and of how he had crushed Rumsey's hopes.

"You were right, of course, Tom, dear," said the widow.

But I think it made her younger to know Rumsey had longed for her, and the knowledge of that longing certainly did not diminish her liking for the Virginian.

Saying good-by for the trip to Boston was not so hard, for the boy was soon to return. In fact Mrs. Strong laughed when she said good-by. Tom had announced that he was going up the Hudson and thence through Massachusetts. The shorter road was by way of Connecticut, the way the stage-coaches ran. His choice of a route might have seemed strange to other people, not so to his mother.

“Good-by, Tom, dear,” she said, and added: “Give my love to Miss Betsey Carhart.” Then she laughed. And Tom laughed, a bit foolishly, and rode northward to Newburgh, where he certainly saw Miss Betsey and certainly gave her his mother’s love, for he wrote home to that effect. He did not tell the rest of his talk with Miss Betsey, but his letter sounded happy—so happy, indeed, that Mrs. Strong cried a little over it. From Newburgh he pushed on through the Berkshires—and found himself in a country that was at war.

The men of Massachusetts, having won freedom, found they had not won perfect happiness. Freedom is one element, a great element, in happiness, but it is only one. There are many others. The small farmers, the few mechanics, of western Massachusetts found life hard after the war. War always brings disorder, always upsets things. Putting things to rights afterwards is not easy. The soldier found it hard to become a shoemaker again. The captain had grown beyond the country-store he had to tend once more. Men who had seen a stricken field of battle found their own peaceful fields grow monotonous, as they guided the plow around the big stones that covered so much of the surface. Debt pressed upon them. Taxes had to be paid. The seacoast felt the quickening touch of commerce as soon as the war was over. The Berkshire farms did not. They clamored for relief by laws which the Assembly, sitting in Boston, controlled, they thought, by the wealth of Boston, would not give. They asked for paper money and were refused. They asked that cows and horses should be made legal tender and were refused. They had just re-

belled successfully against England. So now they rebelled against Boston. News traveled slowly in those days of no railroads, no telegraphs, few travelers, and fewer mails. As Tom drew near Springfield, in Massachusetts, he heard rumors of war. When he got there, he found war. A couple of gray-eyed farmers held him up three miles outside of Springfield. Their guns, which had probably seen Bunker Hill and Lexington, and perhaps Trenton and Yorktown, were leveled at him as he was bidden to dismount. His statement of who he was and why he was bound for Boston—on private business, he said—was received with suspicion.

“Where’d ye come from?”

“From New York.”

“Why didn’t ye go Connecticut way?”

Tom didn’t choose to tell them why he had come by way of Newburgh. They were in no mood to believe him if he had. They held him prisoner until a group of their comrades, going from the plow to the battlefield, as they had done many a time before, plodded by on the way to Springfield.

“Take this young springald to headquarters,” his captors said. “Dan’l ’ll know what to do with him. Mebbe he’s all right and mebbe he ain’t. We dunno. But this ain’t no time for strangers to be riding two hosses through the country. He sez he cum from York and is bound for Bosting. Queer way to make that journey.”

So Tom and his horses were taken into Springfield and left under guard in the yard of a residence there, which Daniel Shays had made his headquarters, in this time of war. The guard was a garrulous, good-natured giant, who gossiped freely with his prisoner.

“What are you fighting for?” asked Tom.

“Wal, we want plenty o’ paper money to pay off our debts, and we don’t want to pay no taxes.”

“How’s the State to be run without taxes?”

“I dunno, son, but Dan’l does. Dan’l Shays is goin’ to fix it.”

Presently Tom was taken within the house and into the presence of “Dan’l.”

Daniel Shays had been an ensign at the battle of Bunker Hill, and had won a captaincy by good

service in the army to the end of the war. He was now a "rebel" for the second time—and a general.

A group of nondescript officials lounged about the room. They all took a hand in examining Tom. As several questions were asked him at once, some confusion resulted. However, he told his story. Amicable chuckles followed his avowal of coming by way of Newburgh "to see a young lady." The boy's frank face and smiling good-nature predisposed his judges in his favor at first. But when he was asked why he was going to Boston and he refused to tell, there was a change. Suspicion gleamed in every eye.

"I bet the New Yorkers is comin' up the Hudson to take us in the rear," suggested one man, "and this here youngster's a sort of advance guard."

"What papers had he upon him?" said Shays.

The guard shook his head. "I dunno. I ain't searched him. Shall I git his saddlebags?"

While he was getting them, Tom took from his pocket Washington's letter to Rufus King and laid it on the table behind which Shays sat.

"That is the only paper I have with me," he

said. "It is a letter from General Washington"—there was a stir of surprise—"to your Mr. Rufus King. I am to deliver it and return to Mount Vernon with Mr. King's answer."

"What's Washington writing King for? He's a Virginian. Let him 'tend to things to hum."

"Open the letter and see if 'tis from Washington."

"Rufus King is a friend of ours. He don't believe in oppressin' the people. A letter to him must be all right."

There was a chorus of talk.

"Well," said Shays, "we'll vote on it. As many as thinks the letter ought to be opened say aye." There were four ayes. "As many as thinks it oughtn't to be opened say no." There were five noes. Daniel Shays voted that way.

"Well, young man, 'tis a close squeak, but you've won out. Take your letter and one of your hosses and clear out, Bosting-way. Adjutant, you give Mr. Strong a safe-conduct. T'other hoss is confiscated for warlike purpusses."

It was useless to object. Of the two steeds, Tom

chose Billy-boy, because Washington had presented him to him. He promised to give no news of what he had seen within the lines of Shays' army and rode away, his safe-conduct in his pocket. It was a needed protection for himself and his horse. Thrice he was stopped on his eastward way, but Shays' rude signature commanded respect, so thrice he was bidden to go on. A few hours after he had left the last outpost, he met the vanguard of the Massachusetts troops marching to suppress "Shays' Rebellion."

These troops were beaten back. The rebellion went on until the spring of 1787. Every attempt to open a court west of Boston meant a riot. At Concord, one Job Shattuck headed a mob of seven hundred men and announced that "the people" had decided that all debts should be considered paid. "Yes, Job," shouted a bystander, "we know all about them two farms you can't never pay for." The mob laughed, but it made the judges adjourn court. One sheriff, threatened with lynching, escaped death by a bit of shrewd Yankee humor. The crowd clamored to hang him because his legal fees

were extortionate. "Gentlemen," he shouted, "I will hang you all for nothing, with the greatest pleasure." With a roar of laughter, he was let go, unharmed. In February, 1787, nearly five thousand Massachusetts militia routed Shays at Springfield, chased him northward through blinding snowstorms, and finally broke up his forces and captured many of them. In March, fourteen leaders were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. They were finally pardoned. So was Shays, after a year of exile in Vermont. He died in 1825. During his later years, he lived on a pension given him for his services in the Revolution.

Billy-boy carried Tom in three days from Springfield to the small town of Boston. There were some spacious and stately homes there, but most of the houses were of wood, small, unpainted, mean. A few of the main streets were paved with rough cobblestones and had sidewalks, equally rough, separated from the streets by posts and a gutter. The pavements were so precious that a horseman who galloped over them was by law fined 83 cents. There were no street numbers. Tradesmen ad-

vertised their wares "at the sign of the Blue Boar," or "at the Goat and Compasses." The narrow streets showed "an endless succession of golden balls, of blue gloves, of crowns and scepters, dogs and rainbows, elephants and horseshoes." The signs had no relation to the goods to be sold. You could buy gloves at the Elephant and cutlery at the Blue Glove. The golden balls, once the proud armorial bearing of the greatest bankers of the Middle Ages and now degraded to a pawnbroker's sign, then might mean anything,—a dry-goods shop or a smith's forge. Tom had never seen in the sober Dutch village of Manhattan such a display as met his eyes in Boston-town.

He finally found Rufus King at Newburyport. King was in his thirty-second year, a fine figure of a man. He had been born in Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, in 1755. Graduated from Harvard soon after our glorious defeat at Bunker Hill, he had served in the Continental Army and then flung himself into politics on the people's side. He was resting now from his labors as one of the Massachusetts delegates to the Continental Congress.

He gave Tom a stately but pleasant welcome, such as a messenger from Washington was sure to command, but he declined to commit himself to any definite decision. "Tell the General I will care-



RUFUS KING

fully consider the letter I have had the honor to receive from him and will reply thereto from New York, during the next session of the Congress."

That was all he would say, and with that Tom had to ride away. Later that year King became a

strong supporter of a strong central government. When he rejoined his colleagues in Congress, he found the weak government of that day starving to death for lack of money. Things had gone from bad to worse. In 1781 the national expenses were \$9,000,000. They are now about \$500,000,000. Congress had borrowed \$4,000,000 and asked the States for the other \$5,000,000. A year later it had received \$422,000 from nine States and nothing from the other four. Of the money it asked for in 1783, it received only one-fifth by midsummer of 1785. In the year of 1786 it received practically nothing. One of King's first duties after he reached New York was to go with James Monroe of Virginia, afterwards the fifth President of the United States, to ask Pennsylvania whether she would not please send a few dollars to the Congress so that the wheels of government might continue to turn. The experience converted Rufus King to Federalism. People who believed as Washington and Hamilton did, in a government strong enough to be respected, were called Federalists. King became a citizen of New York in 1788. The

next year he and General Schuyler were elected the first United States Senators from the Empire State. In that and other capacities he served his country well until 1825. His is one of the names on the long roll of men who deserved well of the Republic and have been forgotten. What he was, is forgotten. What he did, remains.

So Tom, refreshed by good bed and board in Boston, turned back homewards. This time he chose the short way home, through Connecticut, for Shays was keeping all western Massachusetts in disorder and riot, and duty bade him run no risk of further delay. He reached Coventry in Connecticut late on a Saturday night. He expected to leave it early on Sunday morning, but in this he had not reckoned on the famous Blue Laws of Connecticut. If they did not, as has been alleged, forbid a man to kiss his wife on Sunday, they did most strictly forbid traveling on that day. A few years before, Washington had entered in his diary, under a Connecticut date-line, that it being "contrary to the law and disagreeable to the People of this State to travel on the Sabbath day—and my horse after passing

through such intolerable roads wanting rest—I stayed at Perkins' tavern (which, by the bye, is not a good one) all day—and a meeting-house being within a few rods of the door I attended the morning and evening services & heard very lame discourses from a Mr. Pond."

There was also a meeting-house within a few rods of the Coventry inn. Both fronted on the village square. In its center stood the stocks, a contrivance of that day which held an offender's feet and hands firmly, but permitted him, as he sat in the stocks, to move his head with a certain freedom, which made it all the more amusing for the children of the God-fearing populace to throw vegetables and eggs at him. There were stocks in New York. Tom had seen stout offenders fastened into them. I fancy he had sometimes in his very youthful days vied with other boys in throwing mealy potatoes at the sinners. He was to learn something about sitting in the stocks now.

The landlord had grumbled over Tom's order of an early breakfast and had remonstrated with him for his proposed Sabbath-breaking, but our hero felt

it his duty to press on and insisted upon an early meal. He got it. Also he got out his horse, mounted, and rode off. And then he got arrested. A sour-faced man in black stood at the door as he started and gave no answer to Tom's cheery good-morning greeting. Another sour-faced man stood ten feet away. As Billy-boy reached him, he grasped the bridle. The first man said to the astonished rider :

“Ye cannot break the Sabbath in Coventry. Get ye down!”

Tom touched Billy-boy with the spur and gave him his head, but Sour-Face No. 2 hung upon the bridle and Sour-Face No. 1 produced a bell-mouthed blunderbuss and threatened to use it. There was nothing to do but dismount and pay the penalty of the outraged law.

“Not only have ye broken the Sabbath, but ye have defied the tithing-man.”

It was the tithing-man who spoke, Sour-Face No. 1. This defiance was even worse in his eyes than the original offense. He summoned to his aid the landlord, the hostler, and the one other guest at

the inn, a grave person in rusty black who eyed the criminal with horror. Before such a force, the captive was helpless.

"We cannot break the Sabbath by trying him this day," said the tithing-man.

"Never did I see such a criminal face; he is certainly a thief," said the other guest.

"Belike he is a murderer, fleeing from pursuit," suggested the innkeeper. Tom could not help laughing and this was taken as another proof of desperate villainy.

"We'll put him in the stocks till the morrow," decided the tithing-man.

"In the stocks? Nonsense," protested Tom. "The stocks are for people tried and found guilty. I haven't been tried and I'm not guilty. Put me in jail, if you choose, but not in the stocks."

"If ye're put in jail, a man will have to stay away from church to watch ye. In the stocks, ye'll be safe by yerself. And 'twill be a lesson for the children."

There was a smart little scuffle. Tom had no idea of going into the stocks peaceably. The grave

person in rusty black received a fine black eye and the tithing-man lost a couple of teeth, but the fight was too unequal to last. Behold, then, Tom, at seven o'clock of a beautiful October morning, his feet and hands firmly fixed in the stocks, his face glaring grimly at the church porch, his heart in a fury of rage. His one consoling thought was that the boys of Coventry probably would not be permitted to throw things at him on a Sunday.

As a matter of fact, all Coventry kept within doors throughout the day, except for the morning and afternoon church services. On the way to and from these, everybody walked by the criminal. In low voices, everybody agreed that he looked the part. Now, Tom had really good looks. He was not quite what his fond mother thought him, the handsomest boy in the world, but he was a good boy, and he looked so,—until people saw him in the stocks. At noon the tithing-man gave him some bread and water, but refused to talk with him.

"'Tis no day for idle chatter," he said, severely. "Ye can talk to-morrow, when ye're called on for an explanation of your crimes."

The weary day wore on until dusk. Then Tom became aware of a tall man striding towards him, followed by the tithing-man.

"I tell ye, deacon," said the tall man, "I had to travel here to-day. 'Twas a work of necessity. The scamp stole all the money I was paid in Albany for my pelts and scooted. I traced him to near Coventry and lost him. If so be ye've got him in the stocks, it's splendid. Let me see him."

He bent over in the dusk to see the criminal.

"Jehosaphat! ye fool. It's the boy!" he shouted. "He ain't no criminal. Why, Tom, Tom, my son, is it really ye?"

It was Zed Pratt who had come up. The tall trapper was wild with wrath. Tom was too tired and dazed to be surprised.

"Get me out, Zed," he said. "I can't stand this over night."

"Over night? Ye shan't stand it a minnit. Deacon, this is Tom Strong, my boy Tom. Gimme the key. Let him out."

The tithing-man demurred, but when Zed promised to be responsible for Tom's appearance in court

the next day, the prisoner was released. Zed had a sister living at Coventry, as the readers of "Tom Strong, Washington's Scout" may remember. Everybody there knew him. Everybody knew his word was as good as his bond. So Tom, stiff and sore, staggered across the village-green on Zed's arm to Zed's sister's house, where he was made most heartily welcome. On the way, they stopped at the inn for Tom's belongings. There Zed came face to face with the grave man in rusty black, who had been so sure Tom was a thief. Zed seized him with a shout of triumph. It was the robber he had been pursuing from Albany. The bag of doubloons he had stolen was found in his luggage. He was promptly set in the stocks from which Tom had been freed. In the morning, however, he was no longer there. Zed laughingly confessed that he had set him free.

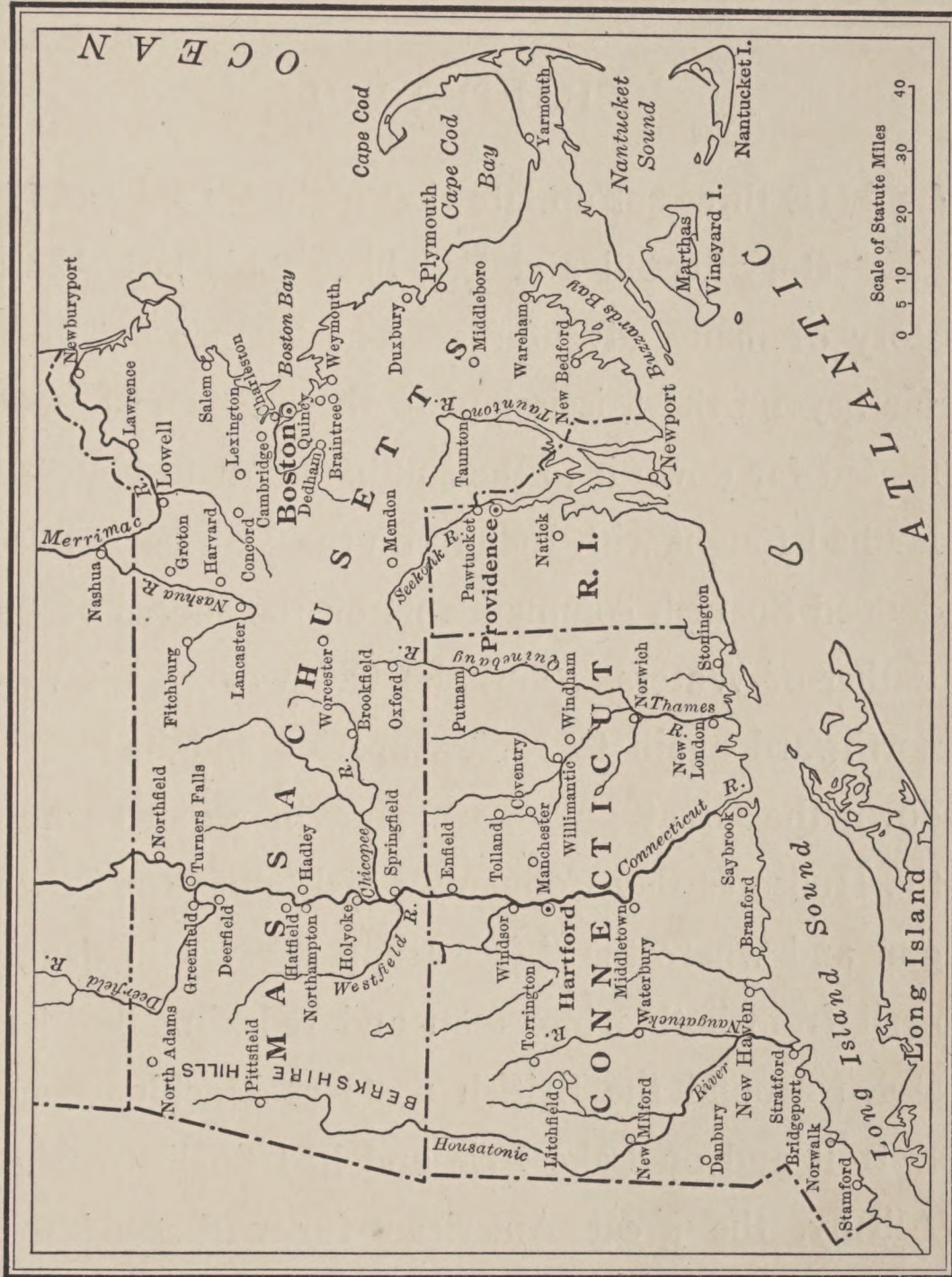
"He was a raskil," said Zed. "That's plumb sure. But I got back my money and I jest cudn't hev a man shut up in jail for years. Think of it, boy. Jest think of it. Shut up in one place. No chance to move roun'. No chance to breathe." The

trapper stretched out his long arms and took deep breaths of the pure, frosty air. "P'raps he'll git honest. Anyways I'm glad he's got away."

A little judicious talk Zed had with the deacon and a little judicious use of a doubloon or two convinced the deacon that "'twan't wuth while" to push the complaint against Zed's friend Tom. The boy-captain found himself free to ride away, on Monday morning. Zed rode beside him and pointed out sundry places, among them the house of "Parson Hale," the father of Nathan Hale, who gave his life for his country, despite Zed's and Tom's reckless attempt to rescue him. The trapper and the boy had much to talk about, as they plodded towards Manhattan Island. Plodding was the only possible thing to do. In the early mornings the roads were frozen hard, but frozen into ridges and ruts. By noon the sunshine had made them mudholes again. Washington had rightly set them down in his diary as "intolerable." They passed more than one wagon and one stage-coach, broken down and abandoned. As they came into Manhattan Island by the Old Post Road, they caught up with the coach that

had left Boston two days before Tom did. Hub-deep in mud, it crawled along. Its unhappy passengers, worn out with their twelve-day journey, were vowing never to travel again. Their descendants can go from Boston to San Francisco in much less than half the time they had spent in going from Boston to New York.

Our two travelers felt their spirits rise as they pushed down by the Murray House, where Tom's quick wit and Mrs. Murray's ready aid had saved Putnam's army from capture by General Howe, ten years before; past the Collect Pond; and so, by Wall Street and Broad Street, to *home*, where Tom's mother came rushing out of the little house to welcome her boy as only mothers can welcome, and to greet "son Zed," twenty-five years older than she was, with almost equal warmth.



CHAPTER VIII

THE three sat up late that night. Tom had his story to tell and Zed his. This last was a story of many adventures. The trapper had been far beyond the Mississippi to the west and he had floated far down it to the south, almost to Natchez. He had fought with Indians on the prairies and had dodged Spanish commandants on the shores of the Father-of-Waters. Then he had worked his way northward again to Lake Superior and had come down the Great Lakes, trapping in regions where the Hudson's Bay Company ruled by right of shotgun and where the "free trapper" was in deadly peril from both white man and redskin. He had stolen around the British posts at Mackinaw and Detroit and on Lake Erie and had finally reached Albany, the great American fur-market of that time, with many bales of furs.

"A good price I got for them," said Zed, "but 'twas after hard bargaining. There's a new man

in the business there. He's gettin' it all. He's a German. John Jacob Astor they call him. He looks like a pauper and dresses like a pauper and lives like a pauper, but he pays you your doubloons on the nail when he's made his bargain. They say he married his wife 'cause he saw her take off a red petticoat and give it to a squaw for a skin that was wuth six petticoats. His eyes goes right through ye. He's got a shop down here in York. I promised to go in and see him when I got here. Don't let me forget to do it."

Of all the marvelous things Zed had done, "Mother Strong" was sure that quite the most marvelous was his chasing the thief to Coventry just in time to save Tom from a night in the stocks.

"It was Providence did that," said Mrs. Strong. "Wonders never cease."

The next morning she was even more sure that wonders never cease. For while the three were at breakfast, there was a tremendous knock on the door and when Tom sprang to open it, a bronzed and bearded giant stood there, to whose hand there clung a weazened little woman about half as big as

he. She clung as if the world would come to an end if once she let go. Indeed she felt so. The giant was Hans Rolf. The little woman was his widowed mother, a Hessian peasant, speaking only German, who had never been beyond the village in which she was born until she had set out on this far journey, to spend the rest of her years with her Americanized son. She had landed that morning. Hans had arrived in New York from his farm near York, Pennsylvania, just in time to meet her and to keep her from going quite mad with loneliness and fear. He had brought her straight to Mrs. Strong.

“Yah, ha!” roared Hans. “Mutter Strong, here is Mutter Rolf. Mein twin Tom, how you vos? And Captain Pratt! Nodings could be better! Now, Mutter, you kisses everybody!”

Mrs. Strong already had the little old woman in her arms. She kissed her tenderly and placed her at the table, comforting her and cooing to her, talking to her with her eyes almost as effectually as if she had been pouring greetings in German upon her. The table was quickly replenished. Mrs. Rolf ate

little, but Hans had brought with him an appetite fit for the giant that he was. Except for an occasional stop to kiss "Mutter Strong" or his own mother, to shake hands again with Zed or to give a bear's-hug to Tom, he ate for an hour. Then Mrs. Strong turned the three men out of doors, so that Mrs. Rolf could have the first sound sleep of her long journey, and the men could have a long talk.

"Gracious lady, you are indeed too good to an old woman," said Mrs. Rolf in German, as she found herself laid in a great bed with lavender-scented sheets, while her beautiful hostess sat beside her, patting her hand till she should fall asleep. Mrs. Strong did not understand the words, but she did the tone.

"For Rolf," she answered, "for Rolf," and smiled divinely. The English words were near enough the German to let the old woman understand.

"Gott sei Dank," she said softly and was asleep.

Meanwhile Zed and Hans and Tom were walking up and down Battery Park, old man and young man and boy, talking together as eagerly as if they had all been of the same age, all with their lives

before them. Hans urged them both to go back to York with him and take up farms. Zed wanted the other two to hear the call of the wild, and seek a free life on the great prairies. Tom pleaded with the others to go to Mount Vernon with him. He was sure Washington would have work for all of them together somewhere. But the three friends could not lead one life. Hans had his farm, his wife, his child, his mother. Tom had three anchors, Washington, Mrs. Strong, and Betsey Carhart. Only Zed had all the world before him where to choose.

The Battery was then the fashionable promenade of New York. People were beginning to throng upon it, as the three friends strolled and talked. It was a small spot, not one-quarter the size of the present park, most of which was under water then. Mrs. Alexander Hamilton gave Tom a gracious smile and bow, stopped him, indeed, long enough to send a condescendingly kind message to his "good mother." Colonel Hamilton himself, hurrying from his law-office in Wall Street to join his wife, shook hands with Zed and Tom and acknowledged Hans Rolf's awkward salute. He took Tom aside.

“The General wrote me you had been at Mount Vernon.”

“I had that honor, Colonel.”

“And how about the mission upon which he sent you?”

“His Excellency will doubtless tell you of it.”

Hamilton laughed. “But you don’t intend to tell me yourself. You were always discreet beyond your years. I know you are going back to Mount Vernon. When do you start?”

“In case His Excellency wishes me to go, I shall of course do so.”

“Will you take him a message from me?”

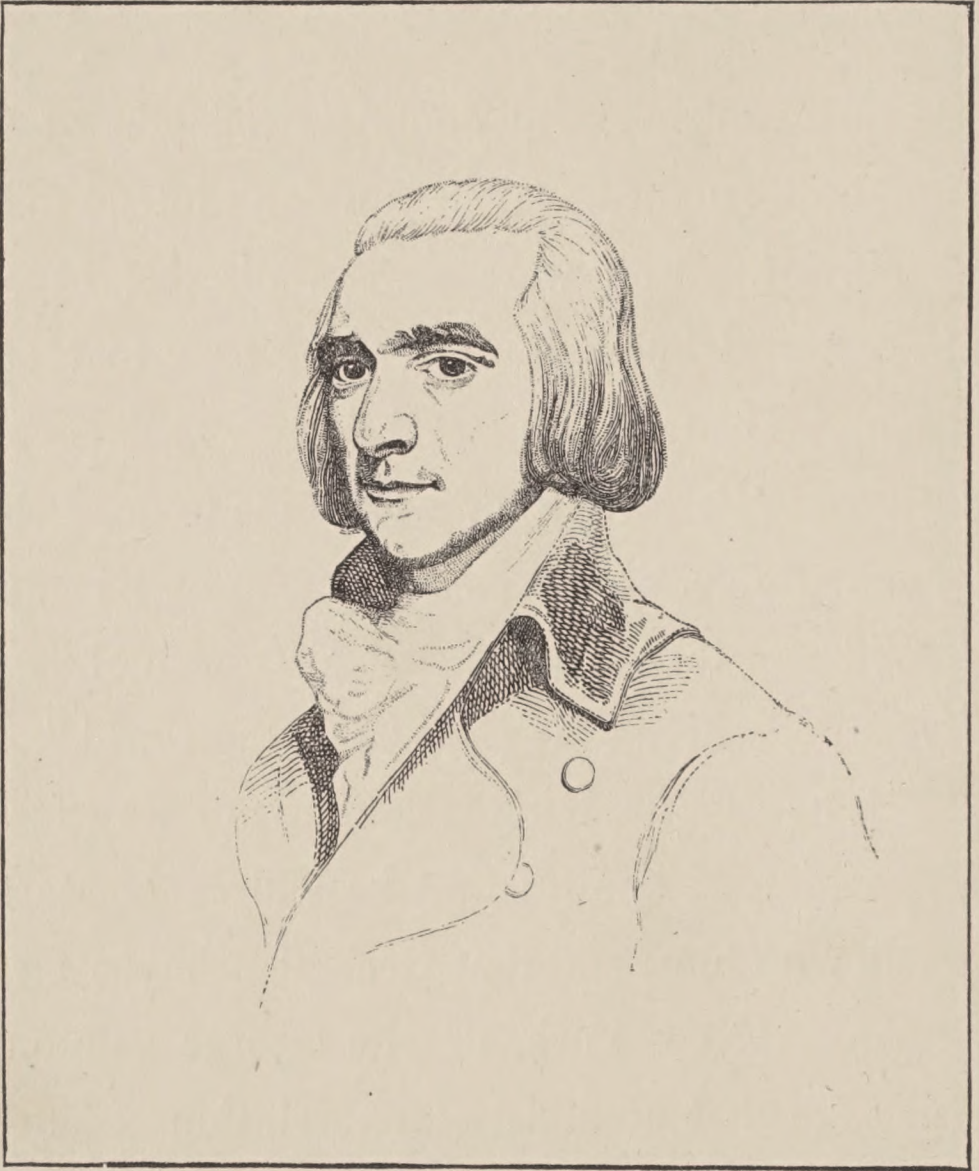
“If I go, with all the pleasure in the world.”

“Tell him Rufus King is coming our way faster than he himself knows; that he will carry Massachusetts with him; and that General Schuyler and I can manage New York, despite George Clinton—and despite that accursed scoundrel, Aaron Burr.”

Hamilton’s eyes flashed with anger as he pronounced Burr’s name. There was a deep gulf of hate between the two. It grew deeper still, up to that fatal day on the heights of Weehawken when

Aaron Burr's bullet pierced Alexander Hamilton's great heart.

Tom rejoined his friends. They walked together



JOHN JACOB ASTOR

After a painting by G. C. Stuart

to a dark little shop, nearby, where bales of furs left scanty room for the table and two chairs that

were all the office furniture of John Jacob Astor. He sat there, a little round-bellied man, like a spider, already spinning the web of one of the great fortunes of the world. The little man never forgot a face. He knew Zed instantly.

“How you do, Captain Pratt? I glad know your friends, but they take walk while we talk business, nicht wahr? Business, it does not talk itself well when many beoples by.”

So Tom and Hans strolled homewards, while Zed sat down in the second chair and Astor opened a battery of questions upon him. He knew Zed had been in what was then the Far West. He wanted to know more. He had him sketch a map of the Mississippi, of the Great Lakes, and of the region beyond so far as Zed knew it or had heard about it. How about beaver? bear? foxes? deer? buffalo? His pudgy hands trembled as Zed told him of regions full of furs. He drew upon the map the shore of the Pacific. He outlined a great river where the Columbia flows. Nobody knew of its existence then.

“Dere *must* be river dere; dere *must* be!”
he repeated.

Then he drew his broad finger-tip down its course to the ocean, and said: “Dere, Captain Pratt, dere is de—de—die zukunft—de future of dese United State. Vill you go dere for me? Vill you make ein trading-post dere? I pays you vell, if you goes.”

A great brain laid the foundation of the Astor fortune. If President Madison had backed up John Jacob Astor, the whole Pacific slope would be ours, from Mexico to Behring's Straits.

“Yes, Mr. Astor, I'll go there if the boy will.”

“De boy?”

“Tom Strong. He was here a minnit ago.”

“If he von't go, dere's plenty of odder boys.”

“There's only one boy for me, Mr. Astor, and that's Tom.”

“Den run and fetch him. I wants you start quick.”

So Zed walked over to Broad Street to try to persuade Tom. However, as he came in sight of the house, he saw in front of it an exceedingly handsome man, standing beside a splendid horse, talking

to Tom. The stranger was not in uniform, but he looked every inch a soldier. Zed was not surprised, as he drew near, to recognize "Light Horse Harry Lee" of Virginia. He had seen him first when Light Horse Harry swept down on Paulus Hook that was, Jersey City that is, and recaptured the American prisoners there. Zed and Tom were two of them. Neither of them was likely to forget their rescuer.

"Zed," called Tom, "come here. General Lee, may I present to you Captain Zed Pratt of the First Continentals? You saved us both when you rode your raid on Paulus Hook."

"You were both worth saving," laughed Lee, "if half what I've heard of you both since is true. Now, Captain Strong, don't mistake the message I've brought you from General Washington. He didn't send me on purpose, but asked me to take it when he found out I was going to New York. He said he had told you to stay a full week with your mother, going and coming, and he didn't like to shorten your visit, but he would like to see you at Mount Vernon as soon as you can get there."

“Then it’s boots and saddle, General,” answered Tom. “I’d like to hear that old bugle call again. I’m off to-day. My mother would not wish me to delay one minute when the General summons me.”

“I am charged with a message to your mother, too,” said Lee. “May I enter and pay her my respects?”

“You honor us by doing so.”

So the stately Virginian was presented in due form to Mrs. Strong, who received him with a courtesy as perfect as his own; to Mrs. Rolf, who was with difficulty kept from standing in his presence; and to Hans, who did stand, most of the time at a salute.

“General Washington bade me say, Mistress Strong, that he hopes you will pardon him for calling your son back so soon and that as you never hesitated to give him to him when there was danger, he believes you will not hesitate, now there is none.”

“I thank His Excellency for giving my son the chance to serve him. My gift of the boy was made once for all, when he took down his father’s gun from that fireplace and started for Long Island.

But please—please—ask His Excellency to let me sometime have Tom for a whole fortnight at a time. Is that too much for a mother to ask?”

“Faith, it sounds like a reasonable request, Mistress Strong. I’ll give it to His Excellency. He’s such a good son himself, I wish he had as good a mother as Tom Strong has.”

“Doubtless he hath one a thousand times better.”

“We don’t tell tales out of school in Virginia, but it’s an open secret Washington’s mother might be wiser than she is. I must away. Your servant, ladies.”

Light Horse Harry Lee bequeathed one immortal phrase to American literature. It was he who said Washington was “first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

He had scarcely left the house before Mrs. Strong was packing Tom’s saddlebags. Hans went to saddle Billy-boy. Zed sat disconsolately by. He told Tom of Astor’s offer and Tom thanked him for bringing it to him, but explained that he couldn’t possibly go to the Far West. Life held too many duties in the Near East. The noon-dinner was

rather solemn. There was lack of appetite. Even Hans did not eat much more than three times as much as anybody else. They all walked down to the waterside, where Tom led Billy-boy on the ferry for Elizabethport. Zed called and Hans roared good-by. The two women waved their handkerchiefs. Tom had gone.

The next day Hans and his mother started for York and Zed for Astor's office. He came back to Mrs. Strong in a strangely serious mood. He had promised to go to the Pacific, overland, where no white man had ever trod, where savages swarmed, where the Hudson's Bay Company would do its best to have him murdered, as soon as it heard of his journey. Perhaps the old trapper was beginning at last to feel his years. It was the first time Mrs. Strong had ever seen him dejected.

"I dunno what's cum over me," he said. "I dunno. That's a big man, that Mr. Astor. He's giv' me a big chance. I want to go and I'm goin'. But somehow, I ain't none too sure I'm ever comin' back. I never felt this way afore. I wish I was sure of seein' you again, Mother Strong, and—and

—the boy. If anythin' does happen, Mother Strong, you tell Tom——”

There he stopped. Mrs. Strong was crying softly.

“Who is going with you, Captain Zed?”

“There ain't nobody. I'm goin' alone.”

“Alone? Through that wilderness? Captain, you're too old.”

“S'pose I am; s'pose I am. But if I can't have Tom, I don't want nobody.”

He was firm in his resolve. Since he couldn't have Tom, he started alone, three days later, after many hours' talk with Astor. He went by way of Albany to Lake Erie, where he had hidden a canoe on a lonely shore when he last came back to civilization. He stood up now in the Strong living-room, every inch a man in his deerskin coat and shirt, breeches and leggings. A tomahawk hung in his belt on his right side. On the left were knife, powder-horn, and bullet-pouch. A pack of beads and other trifles for trading with the Indians was on his back. He put down his long rifle on the table. He lifted up his hands and prayed the God of the widow and the orphan to bless “Mother

Strong and my boy Tom.” He thanked God for all they had been to him. He prayed God he might return to them. Then with a cheerful smile, he kissed Mrs. Strong good-by, put one of her hands for a moment on his own bowed head, smiled again as his keen eyes swept the familiar room, took up his rifle, put on his foxskin cap, and walked out of the door, gently closing it. Mrs. Strong opened it and looked after him. He never turned his head.

Tom’s first stop for anything but food or sleep was at the Blue Cow, Philadelphia, where Friend Jonathan Brown and Friend Martha, his daughter, greeted Friend Thomas with grave smiles. He had such a delightful way of smiling himself that almost everybody who looked at him liked him. Even Benjamin Franklin, President of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, seemed glad to see him. Franklin listened attentively to the tale of the interview with Rufus King and seemed a bit disturbed by it, but his face brightened when he heard of Alexander Hamilton’s message. He gave Tom a bulky letter to Washington, and, as a crowning mark of favor,

handed him a copy of "Poor Richard," autographed by its august author. "Read these maxims," his manner seemed to say, "and then look at me and see how great a man following them has made me!" The world has forgotten "Poor Richard," but it was once by far the most widely-read book in America and in France, where the presses could not print the translation fast enough for the multitudes eager to buy.

Before Tom's audience was over, another man was announced.

"Stay," said Franklin, "this is a worthy man who will interest you,—a Mr. John Fitch, who thinks he has invented a boat to go by steam."

As he spoke, Fitch entered. He was straight as an Indian and dark as an Indian. His eyes, hair, and face were dark. He was six feet two inches tall. He came in with rapid steps, swinging his arms violently. His life had been hard. His melancholy face showed it. In his youth at Windsor, Connecticut, his father kept him at tasks too heavy for his years for long hours every day. He was apprenticed to a watchmaker, who starved him, preaching always of

the sin of gluttony and giving him no chance to indulge in it. He tried button-making. He set up a silversmith's shop at Trenton and lost everything when the British sacked that town. After a winter in the army at Valley Forge, he went to Kentucky as a surveyor. On his second trip there, he was captured by Indians, taken into the interior of Ohio and made to run the gauntlet. A British officer ransomed him and took him to Detroit. When he was exchanged, he had made enough money in Detroit to repay the ransom and meet his expenses home. In April, 1785, he began drawings for a car to be moved by steam on ordinary roads. He did not then know there was such a thing as a steam-engine in existence. Soon afterwards he began to plan a steamboat, not a suction-boat such as Tom had worked upon with Rumsey, but a paddle-boat. In 1785, he had tried to interest Washington in his invention, but had found him committed to Rumsey, for whom ever afterwards he had a petulant hatred. Now he was seeking help from Franklin. In these days of giant corporations, with hundreds of millions of dollars, John Fitch's proposal

sounds oddly. His proposed capital was \$800, in forty shares of \$20 each. Of the \$800, half was to go to him and half to be spent on the steamboat. He walked swiftly up to Franklin's chair and said:

"Your Excellency, I can place all my shares if you will take five of them. Will you?"

"'Tis more than I can spare, my friend. I might take two."

"Nay, Your Excellency, it must be five. How else can I name the boat after you?"

"Was that your intention?" A smile of gratified vanity stole over Franklin's face.

"With Your Excellency's permission."

"I care naught for such vain things, but an' ye insist, ye may do so. And I will take the five shares."

Fitch's Indian eyes shot fire. He stammered his thanks and went out, to begin a long career of hope and despair, of half-success and utter failure. He begged of Virginia and Maryland and Delaware and Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and begged in vain. A like fate followed him in England and France. He worked his way home as a common sailor before

the mast in 1794. In 1796, he withdrew, broken in body, spirit, and purse, to some land in Kentucky, which he had earned by making surveys of a larger tract. Two years later he died there. His very grave was forgotten. Yet he had launched a boat upon the Delaware which ran with paddles, impelled by steam, three miles an hour in still water. He was one of our great inventors. Truly, the way of the inventor is hard.

A few days later, as Tom drew near Mount Vernon, he heard the sound of hunting-horns. Billy-boy, jaded as he was by the long journey, pricked up his ears, neighed, and evidently longed for the chase. A fox dashed by, sprang upon a rail-fence, ran along it some rods, and was off again, over the hills. A pack of hounds in full cry made music in the air. They were checked for a moment at the fence, but an old hound, taught by experience every trick a fox could try, soon caught the scent again. He gave mouth. The pack yelped madly and followed him. There was a crash in a nearby cane-brake. Young Washington broke through. The General was close behind him. The field came scat-

tering after them. Uncle and nephew waved a welcome to Tom as they flashed by. Both were riding hard to be in at the death. Soon after Billy-boy had walked up to the mansion and then, when Tom dismounted, had walked off with a brisker step to the stables, the two Washingtons rode up. The nephew was waving the fox-brush in triumph. The uncle was grimly smiling. As he leapt to the ground he said:

“Again welcome to my house, Captain Strong. Your room awaits you. My nephew will take you to it.”

Tom soon felt at home in the well-ordered life of Mount Vernon. He had made his report to the General about his talks with Franklin and King, and had given him the former's letter. Men were coming and going daily. Messengers arrived from as far south as Savannah and from as far north as Boston. Evidently something was on foot. Washington offered no confidences and Tom asked for none. Except when he was doing something for his host, such as writing a letter or carrying one to some nearby plantation, he fished and shot with George

Augustine Washington and more than once he rode to hounds with Washington himself, cheering on "Mopsey" and "Truelove," "Sweetlips" and "Music." He studied, too, at his host's suggestion, the administration of the plantation. He learned how corn and wheat were grown and harvested and sacked and shipped. He saw cloth grow on the looms and shoes on the lasts. He found out that every man and woman on the plantation, slave or free, had an allotted task and had to do it on time and well. He never forgot those lessons. They stayed with him and helped him all his life long. The lessons were manifold.

Here is an account by General John Mason, son of George Mason of Virginia, of the life on his father's plantation, four miles below Mount Vernon: "It was very much the practice with gentlemen of landed or slave estates . . . so to organize them as to have considerable resources within themselves; to employ and pay but few tradesmen, and to buy little or none of the coarse stuffs and materials used by them. . . . Thus my father had among his slaves carpenters, coopers, sawyers, blacksmiths,

tanners, curriers, shoemakers, spinners, weavers, knitters, and even a distiller. His woods furnished timber and plank for the carpenters and coopers, and charcoal for the blacksmith; his cattle killed for his own consumption and for sale supplied skins for the tanners, curriers, and shoemakers; and his sheep gave wool and his fields produced cotton and flax for the weavers and spinners; and his orchards fruit for the distiller. His carpenters and sawyers built and kept in repair all the dwelling-houses, barns, stables, plows, harrows, gates, etc., on the plantations and the outhouses at the house. His coopers made the hogsheads the tobacco was prized in, and the tight casks to hold the cider and other liquors. The tanners and curriers, with the proper vats, etc., tanned and dressed the skins as well for upper as for lower leather to the full amount of the consumption of the estate, and the shoemakers made them into shoes for the negroes. A professed shoemaker was hired for three or four months in the year to come and make up shoes for the white part of the family. The blacksmiths did all the ironwork required by the establishment, as

making and repairing plows, harrows, teeth, chains, bolts, etc. The spinners, weavers, and knitters made all the coarse cloths and stockings used by the negroes and some of finer texture worn by the white family, nearly all worn by the children of it. The distiller made every fall a good deal of apple, peach, and persimmon brandy. . . . All these operations were carried on at the home house and their results distributed as occasion required to the different plantations. Moreover, all the beeves and hogs for consumption or sale were driven up and slaughtered there at the proper seasons, and whatever was to be preserved was salted and packed away for after distribution. My father kept no steward or clerk about him. He kept his own books and superintended, with the assistance of a trusty slave or two, and occasionally of some of his sons, all the operations at and about the home house above described."

In those days the New England farmer had the same business ideal as the Virginia planter—to buy little or nothing. A Massachusetts farmer of that time writes: "My farm gave me and my whole

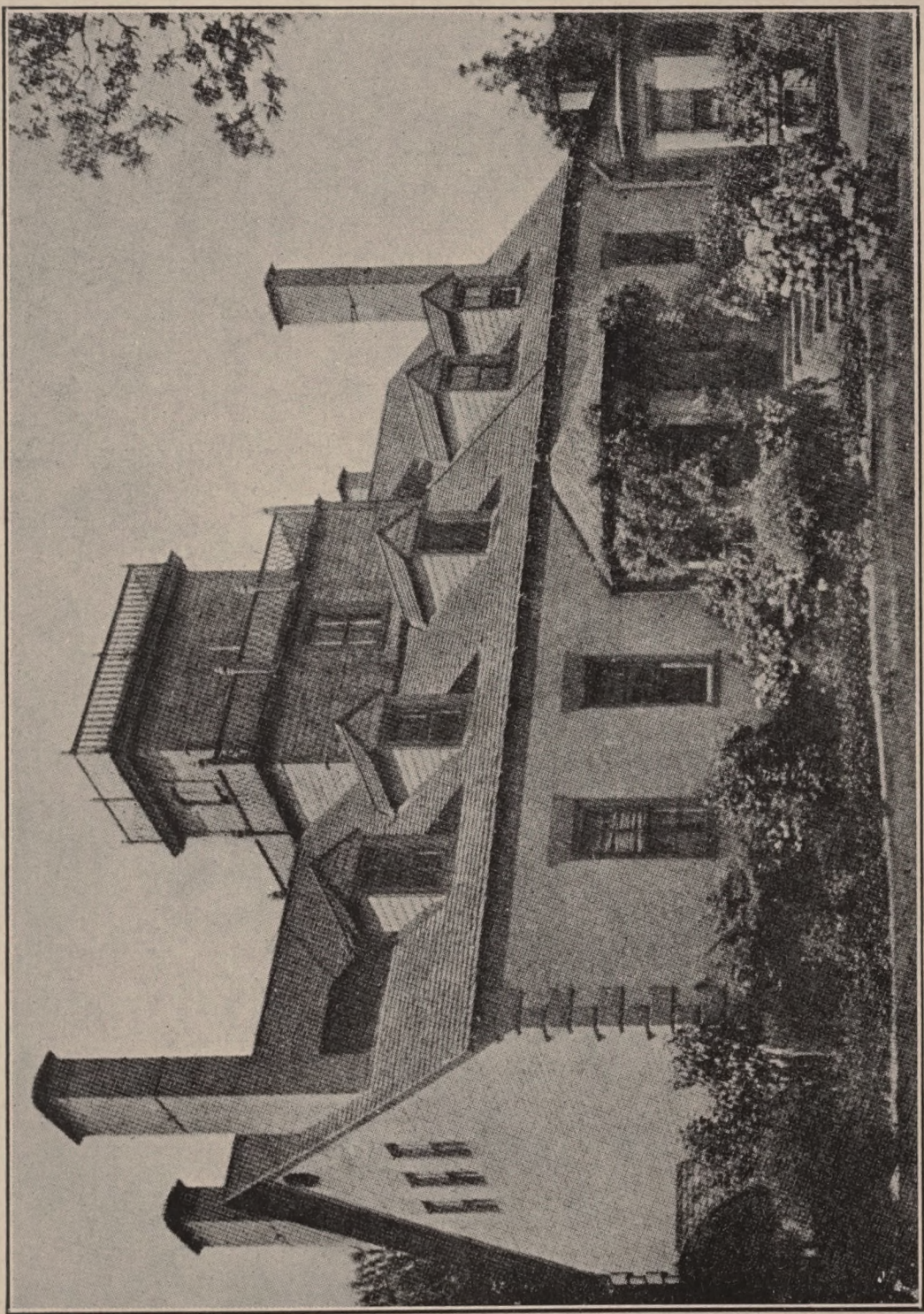
family a good living on the produce of it and left me, one year with another, one hundred and fifty silver dollars, for I never spent more than ten dollars a year, which was for salt, nails, and the like. Nothing to wear, eat, or drink was purchased, as my farm provided all."

Gunston Hall, George Mason's place, still stands and is still a home. Its owner, Mr. Paul Kester, writes:

"Of the seven or eight thousand acres which once belonged to it only five hundred now remain attached to the hall. The house itself is well preserved, the terraced garden remains, and a box walk. George Mason, the author of the famous Virginia Bill of Rights and the Constitution of Virginia, is buried only a few hundred feet from the house he built and which he loved so dearly. Pilgrims come from all parts of the country to visit Gunston Hall; they are invariably admitted. Gunston was built in the last years of the reign of George II., 1758. Though small it is massive in construction and its interior is not unimpressive."

George Washington, like George Mason, kept his own books and relied little upon hired superintendents. He used to ride over the home plantation every morning before breakfast. Martha Washington was no less busy. A feminine visitor to Mount Vernon in 1798, when Lady Washington was sixty-seven, quite old enough to have won the right to rest, writes to a relative that "the old lady" always speaks of the years when she presided over the presidential court as "her lost days." "Let us repair," says this visitor, "to the old lady's room, which is . . . nicely fixed for all sorts of work. On one side sits the chambermaid, with her knitting; on the other, a little colored pet, learning to sew. An old, decent woman is there, with her table and shears, cutting out the negroes' winter clothes, while the good old lady directs them all, incessantly knitting herself. She points out to me several pairs of nice colored stockings and gloves she had just finished."

Bishop Meade quoted this letter and said, of the wives of other Virginia planters: "How often have I seen, added to the above-mentioned scenes of the



GUNSTON HALL

chamber, the instruction of several sons and daughters going on, the churn, the reel, and other domestic operations all in progress at the same time, and the mistress, too, lying on a sick-bed!"

It would be hard to find a scene of happier, more constant activity than a great Virginia plantation of that time. Slavery was gentle. The life was patriarchal. Blacks and whites were regarded as one large family. Thus General Mason speaks in the passage quoted from him of shoes made by "a professed shoemaker . . . for the white part of the family."

Tom heard Washington make one of the two puns he is remembered to have made during his whole life. This one is not funny enough to cause regret that he did not make more. Among the guests at dinner one day was a clergyman. In the ordinary course of things a clerical guest would have expected to say grace, but Washington did so himself, and when his wife protested, he answered:

"My dear, I wish clergymen and all men to know I am not a graceless man."

Martha Washington pouted perceptibly, and the

General looked scared. At least Tom always said he did.

Summoned to the General's study one afternoon, Tom found him fingering a map, pinned down to the broad table, and supplemented by a great sheet of brown paper, upon which Washington had drawn sundry lines.

"I have here," said the General, "a map of the upper Mississippi and the Ohio. 'Tis the work of an ingenious mechanic, one John Fitch, who has been prisoner of the Indians and has seen much of what he has here drawn. This Fitch came here once to get me to subscribe for a steamboat he would fain build, but our friend Rumsey had been beforehand. I had to send him away empty-handed. Natheless he has had the courtesy to send me his map—he writes 'twas printed on a cider-press; perhaps I could use my press before the apples ripen to print something—and I have added somewhat to it."

He ran his finger over the additions.

"Here lies the Pacific. I told you once our flag would sometime go there."

“ Captain Pratt is taking it there now, Your Excellency.”

“ What mean you? ”

“ There is a fur-trader in New York, newly arrived from Germany, a Mr. Astor. He has sent Zed—Captain Pratt—across the continent. He is to make a trading-post at a point about here ”—Tom put his finger on the map—“ where this Mr. Astor says there must be the mouth of a great river.”

“ Good. ’Tis a fine plan. It must be a good brain that has thought that out and a stout heart that backs such a plan. It is a stout heart, too, that is to take Captain Pratt through such a journey. He is serving his country well. May he return in safety.”

“ Amen,” said Tom.

“ ’Tis another journey I would propose to you, Captain Strong; not as dangerous, but not without risk. Here is the lower Mississippi. Its western shore is all Spanish—at least it is to-day. From the Kentucky boundary south, the Spaniards claim all the eastern shore and occupy most of it. Besides their great town of New Orleans, they have a

post at Natchez. I have marked it on the map. Now, Captain Strong, some day Natchez will be ours and New Orleans, too. The outlet of the great Mississippi Valley must be in American hands. Even now, we must have the right to trade there. That is denied us by the Spaniard. Kentucky grumbles over this. I fear she may secede if she does not get the right to trade. I want you to go to Pittsburg and thence down the Ohio to the Mississippi, taking a boatload of goods with you, and thence down the Mississippi as far as the Spaniard will permit. Find out just what the difficulties are. Try by fair words to win your way to New Orleans. Your goods should pay your way. If the Spaniard seizes them, 'twill be no great price to pay for the knowledge you will get. Will you go?"

"Most gladly, Your Excellency."

CHAPTER IX

A FEW days later, Billy-boy had carried Tom northward from Mount Vernon. Washington had given him full instructions and plenty of money. He was to make up his own party, buy his own boat and merchandise, and run his own campaign. He had ridden straight to York, in Pennsylvania, and had hired Hans Rolf to take the trip with him. Now, on the great turnpike that led to Pittsburg, three huge "Conestoga wagons" were lumbering in Indian file. Hans drove the first. Tom rode beside it. The three were full of pots and pans, of skillets and ovens, of axes and plows. The road was full of traffic. All the trade with the country west of the Alleghanies went over it. The wagons were as rough and rude as the men who drove them. Very rarely a light carriage appeared. Its occupants were lucky if some drunken wagoner did not purposely drive into the vehicle, smashing a pole, breaking a wheel, or upsetting the whole rig. At

nightfall each group of wagons stopped where wood and water were to be found. The horses or oxen were led to water, then picketed to graze. Campfires were lighted. Greasy food was greasily cooked. Pipes made their owners happy awhile. Then came sleep. At dawn everybody was up. By sunrise the creaking wagons began their slow journey westward again. It was a hard life. Weaklings died of it. Only the strong remained. Day after day slipped by until Tom almost lost count of them.

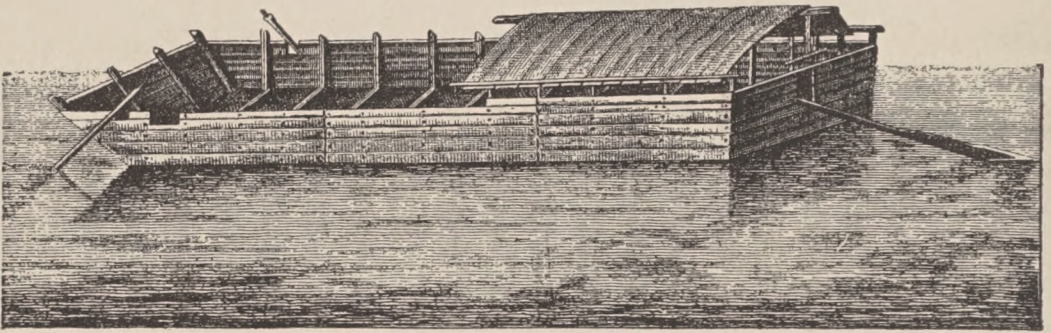
He was not lonely, partly because he had always in his mind a vision of what he was going to see, the majestic Mississippi; partly because he was uplifted by the feeling that he, like Zed on his far journey, was serving his country; and partly because he had Hans with him. Hans was a tower of strength. His experience on his farm had taught him not only how to drive a wagon well, but how to meet any kind of emergency. He could mend a broken axle and patch a rent in the bulging canvas top of the Conestoga wagon. He could cook, if not well, at any rate less badly than the other wagoners. His giant strength often got a wagon through a

mudhole that seemed bottomless. And his splendid spirits helped everybody in everything. He had probably never heard of John Adams of Massachusetts, afterwards the second President of the United States, and had certainly never read his saying: "Let us be cheerful whatever happens; cheerfulness is not a sin in any times," but he practised that saying every minute of every day. He was not a man of much brain, but he had a great heart. When he laughed, the woods rang; even the draft-animals seemed to pull harder; and every man who heard the giant's gleeful roar buckled down to his task.

Finally Tom's caravan bumped its way into Pittsburg, a tiny town of a hundred buildings and a thousand people. Though it was the market-place of the West, it grew slowly. As late as 1795 a traveler described it as "a thriving town containing at present about 200 houses, 50 of wch are brick and framed & the remainder Log."

The first thing to do was to buy a boat. That was not so easy, for the rush of emigration to Kentucky had set in, and two or three flatboats left

Pittsburg every day. Practically none returned. When the pioneer reached his destination, he built his new home out of the timber and planks of his boat. However, Tom finally found a good one at a fair price. It was just a wooden box, with an oblong flat bottom, with four sides five feet high. The



EARLY OHIO RIVER FLATBOAT

rear half was roofed over. Through a small square window at the stern, a long sweep ran out into the water and served as a rudder. Forward on each side was a hole, through which an oar could be plied. More oars were not needed in a boat built only to go down-stream. Front, sides, and rear were holes for rifle-fire. Rarely did a boat go down the Ohio without at least one brush with the Indians. The covered space was for sleeping-quarters and for storage of the flour and tobacco which were

to be bought in Kentucky for the New Orleans market. It was with these that Tom expected to make most money. A barrel of flour was worth twice as much in Louisiana as it was in Kentucky. A dollar's worth of tobacco at Louisville brought five dollars on the levee at New Orleans. No wonder Kentucky insisted upon the free navigation of the Mississippi. She was then a county of Virginia, but she was threatening to set up as an independent nation, nay, even to become part of Spain, unless her bacon and hams, her flour and tobacco could go unvexed under the Stars-and-Stripes to the Gulf of Mexico.

Tom and Hans were loading the boat, when a sal-low, stout lad of about sixteen asked them for a job. His looks did not recommend him. His black eyes shifted their gaze uneasily. But it was hard to hire men on the frontier, especially to go beyond "the Ohio rapids." There was need of at least four men in the crew. And when he said he came from New Orleans, could speak Spanish, knew the river, and knew a negro who would go, too, Tom engaged him on the spot. His name, he said, was Juan

Gregorio. His negro acquaintance, Jim, turned out to be rather old, but strong enough to be of use, and willing to work. Juan said Jim was not his slave, but had been hired to go to New Orleans for a year. Jim proudly assured Tom he was a free man. So the bargain was struck. The four loaded the boat quickly. The plows and the boxes of hardware were piled against the sides of the boat, leaving the center free, and also free access to the oars. In the roofed-in part, there was one mattress,—only one, for three of the crew must always be awake, two at the oars and one at the rudder-sweep. Provisions for the journey were put under cover. A flat sheet of iron was to be used to hold the fire for cooking. Four rifles hung from hooks.

When all was ready, Tom walked up the river-bank to the "Great West Hotel," a log-hut of four rooms, where the man to whom he had sold his wagons and horses was to meet him to pay for them. He was also to take Billy-boy back to the East. He was there and he paid over the money, but he seemed to have something on his mind. Finally he blurted out:

“ Say, stranger, 'tain't none o' my bizness, but I hearn tell you wuz goin' to take that boy Juan 'long with you. Be you? ”

“ Yes. Do you know anything against him? ”

“ Wal, not exactly, but folks do say——”

“ What do they say? ”

“ They sez Juan's a Spanish spy 'n' that he's takin' that pore old Jim, who's as free as you 'n' I be, down to Orleans to sell him ez a slave. And—stranger ”—his voice sank to a whisper—“ they sez Juan's one of General Wilkinson's men.”

“ Who is General Wilkinson? ”

“ Lordy! you don't know who Wilkinson is! Say, stranger, whar wuz you raised? Wilkinson's the biggest man in Kentucky. I ain't sayin' nuthin' agin Wilkinson. And p'raps Juan is all right. I dunno.”

He shuffled away. Tom tried to forget what he had said against Juan, but did not quite succeed in doing so. He walked back to the boat. A man was leaning against the side of it, talking to Hans. He was well-built and wore his well-cut clothes with something of the air of a man of the world. Tom

was rather surprised at his general appearance, but he knew all kinds of people were emigrating. He was more surprised, however, to hear Hans say:

“Yah, ve go Natchez and New Orleans, too.”

He had strictly cautioned his comrades not to talk of his plans and had spoken himself in Pittsburg only of a trip to “the rapids,” where by this time there was a tiny town called Louisville. He stopped short, vexed at Hans’s carelessness. The stranger turned around and saw him.

“You are Captain Strong?”

“That is my name.”

“Mine is Charles Smith. Glad to meet you, Captain. I’d like to go down the river with you. If you don’t think I can work my passage, I’ll pay for it, if you’ll take me.”

“I don’t believe——”

“Now, Captain, don’t say no. I’m an Englishman and my wife is at Natchez. Gayoso, the commandant there, has given all us Englishmen notice to quit or else become Spanish subjects and I mean to turn American instead. I’ve just got to go there and take my wife away.”

Now, the whole countryside knew that Gayoso had given such an order. Smith's story was plausible enough. The cost of taking him would be almost nominal. A fifth man to handle an oar or a rifle was worth having.

"All right," said Tom. "I'll take you, but I want to push off soon. How soon can you be ready?"

"I'm ready now. I haven't a soul to say good-by to. I don't know anybody here except the wagoner who brought me in this morning, and I quarreled with him. He tried to overcharge me."

He stepped briskly on board, put down his rifle and buckskin bag, shook hands with Juan, to whom he introduced himself, and nodded to Jim.

"Shall I take an oar, Captain?" he asked.

He and Juan took the oars and Jim the sweep, while Tom and Hans pushed the boat off the bank. The slow current of the Ohio caught her. Current and oars soon carried her around a low wooded point, which cut off Pittsburg from sight. The voyage had begun. Smith and Juan handled the oars well. It was evident that both of them knew how

to manage a flatboat. Tom congratulated himself upon having them with him. He took Hans aside and chided him gently for having told Smith their plans. Hans stared, open-eyed and puzzled.

“Dot Schmidt tell me he seen you; dot you told him ye go Natchez and Orleans; dot you say he go mit us.”

“I never saw him in my life before.”

“Den he tell me von big lie.”

“I don’t like the looks of it one little bit,” said Tom, “but perhaps you misunderstood him, Hans. You talk splendid English, Hans, of course, but you don’t always understand it just right, do you?”

“I understand him alretty goot. He tell me von big lie,” insisted Hans.

“Well, if he’s really going to get his wife and she’s alone down there, perhaps he thought he had a right to lie so as to get there. He knows how to row and I don’t see that he can do us any harm. But I don’t like his lying. We must keep our eyes open, Hans. I’ll arrange the work so that either you or I will always be on guard. I’m captain and you’ll be mate.”

Hans grinned with pleasure at his promotion. He had come with Tom partly to escape for a while from the monotony of life on a farm, chiefly for the love he bore the boy-captain, but he had not expected the honor of being second in command. He drew himself up to his full height.

“Meine mutter vill be proud of her son, de mate of de—— Vot is de boat’s name, Captain?”

“The ‘Lovely Betsey,’” said Tom, smiling shyly.

“Mate of de ‘Luffly Betsey,’” repeated Hans, proudly.

They were now on a broad reach of the Ohio, which the French, its discoverers, had called “la belle rivière,”—the beautiful river. Well did it deserve its name. Even on this winter day the outlines of its shores, though they lacked the green glory of the warmer months, were bold and beautiful. Sometimes a hut showed on some headland, but for miles at a time there was no sign of human habitation. Deer stared wonderingly from the shore. When they were near the bank, they could hear the call of the wild turkey. A bear was rifling a honey-tree on an island, in fat disregard of the furious

swarm of bees about his head and of the human enemies so dangerously near.

"I shoots him," said Hans and started for his rifle.

"No shooting, except on my order," Tom commanded. "Do you hear that, Smith? And you, Juan? And you, Jim?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Si, Señor Captain."

"Yes, massa Captain."

The response was prompt and hearty. Tom felt that he had his crew well in hand. Presently he took Juan off his oar, put Hans in his place, and gave himself an hour's sleep.

He was awakened by the sound of stealthy whispering. He was just about to speak when he heard something that made him listen instead. Smith was speaking to Juan, who was steering.

"If you don't give me half of what you make on the nigger, I'll tell the captain the whole thing."

"Now, Don Carlos, I've always treated you fair. I got you the chance to come with us. The captain was inclined to suspect me a bit, but he hasn't the

least idea we're old pals. I'm willing to go halves with you on the boat and its cargo, when we get rid of Strong and the big Dutchman, but Jim's my own private spec. He thinks he's going to hire out at New Orleans. He doesn't know I'm going to swear he's my slave and get twelve hundred milled dollars for him. You've no right to come in on that."

"I will come in on it. You split even, or we split—now."

"It isn't fair, Don Carlos, but have it your own way."

"Then I get half the boat and cargo and half what we sell Jim for."

"*Caramba*, yes. What's your plan for getting rid of Strong and Rolf?"

"We'll get 'em to land a couple of days this side of Natchez. Then we'll put off and leave 'em."

"Suppose they won't land?"

"We have knives, haven't we? Dead men tell no tales. But won't Gayoso seize the boat at Natchez?"

"General Wilkinson is at Point Pleasant. When we stop there to load flour, he is to give me a letter

that will pass the 'Lovely Betsey' all right to Orleans as my boat."

"Good. We'll sell everything, including Jim. Halves, remember!"

"Halves it is."

The two scoundrels shook hands. Charles Smith, or Don Carlos, as Juan called him, crept away. Tom lay very still, thinking. So Juan and Smith, who had pretended not to know each other, were old friends. They had plotted together to come down with him, to maroon or kill him and Hans, to steal the boat and its cargo. Juan had lured poor old Jim to go with him by a promise of good wages. With cold-blooded cruelty, he had planned to sell the faithful negro into lifelong slavery. And Smith was to share in the profits of this crime, too. Certainly Tom had plenty to think about. He decided to bide his time and to say nothing to Hans and Jim until the day of action came. He turned on the mattress, stretched himself, sat up, and yawned as though he had just awakened.

Day after day the "Lovely Betsey" floated down the broad reaches of the beautiful river. Every-

thing went well on board. There was no sign of the villainy that was hatching. Juan and Smith did their work well and cheerfully. They did not draw apart from the others. There was no more whispering. They laughed and sang. Juan produced a mandolin and thrummed out sentimental songs of love and home. Sometimes it almost seemed to Tom that he must have dreamed of that rascally talk, but he knew he had been wide awake when he heard it. Well, there was no risk until the Mississippi was reached. He wanted Juan to get that letter from General Wilkinson. He thought he might find a use for it himself. So he laughed and talked with the two men who meant to maroon or to murder him, talked as if he had not a care in the world. Jim showed a doglike fidelity that touched Tom's heart. He vowed to himself that Jim should be saved.

One afternoon a little town came in sight on the Kentucky shore. There were a blockhouse, grist-mill, a dozen huts, and a couple of storehouses. It was Point Pleasant, the end of the first lap of the adventurous journey. The boat was brought to the

shore and tied to a tree, while the whole population of the village gathered to welcome the voyagers. Among them was a man of military bearing, who was treated with great respect by the simple folk around him. Juan pointed him out to Tom.

“That is General Wilkinson. He is a friend of my father and knows me.”

“Everybody can have shore-leave until two hours after sunset. I’ll stay on the boat. Tell the storekeepers I’ll buy a hundred barrels of flour, at a fair price, and some tobacco.”

There was a chorus of hearty greetings as the four men landed. Friendships are made at sight on the frontier. Hans’s mighty laugh rang out. Jim was chattering with some negroes. Smith was evidently known by several of the throng. Juan went straight to Wilkinson.

This was a strange character. James Wilkinson was a doctor, when the news of Bunker Hill drew him to the American army at the siege of Boston. He was Benedict Arnold’s aide-de-camp when Arnold made his gallant attack upon Canada. He was at Saratoga and was commissioned for bravery

there a brigadier-general in the Continental Army. He would never tell what he did thereafter until he



GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON

From a portrait in the State House, Philadelphia, Pa.

appeared in Kentucky nearly ten years afterwards. There he took a prominent part from the first. He was active in trying to make Kentucky independent.

He listened to Sir Guy Carleton, now Lord Dorchester and in command of Canada, when that nobleman suggested that Kentucky should throw in her lot again with England and become part of a Canada that would stretch to the Gulf of Mexico and so have an outlet to the sea. He coquetted with Miró, who ruled Louisiana from New Orleans and wooed Kentucky to become a province of Spain, so that the coveted outlet might be hers. He took an oath of allegiance to the Spanish King. He was more than suspected of being an ally of Aaron Burr, when Burr planned to carve an empire for himself out of the Mississippi Valley and Texas. He was often accused of treason and twice courtmartialed. But he was acquitted; he was again made a brigadier-general; he fought well in some minor Indian troubles and in the War of 1812 with England; and he finally vanished southward and died in Mexico in 1825. How far he went in his allegiance to Spain is not known, but it is a suspicious fact that he was able to send boats to New Orleans, when no other Kentuckian could get by Natchez.

Tom bought his flour and tobacco that night. The

next day it was brought on board. The flour-barrels were ranged round the sides of the cabin. The tobacco was hung from the cabin-roof. The "Lovely Betsey" turned her blunt nose downstream again. Tom watched Juan narrowly. He wished to see where General Wilkinson's letter was carried. He soon located it in the breast-pocket of Juan's buckskin coat. The Spaniard kept patting himself there and the crackle of paper was sometimes heard when he did so.

Another kind of crackle, the crack of rifle-shots, was heard the next day. The "Betsey" had just swung around a headland when a white man came rushing down to the water's edge, calling for help.

"Steer for the shore; pull hard," commanded Tom.

"Beg pardon, Captain," said Smith, who was off duty at the time, "it's a common trick of the Indians to make a captive serve as a decoy. If we land, we'll be killed."

"We'll have that man," Tom answered. "Get your own gun and bring out the others."

Hans and Juan were at the oars; Jim was steer-

ing. A rifle was placed within reach of each. Tom and Smith crouched in the square bow of the boat, rifles trained on the shore. When they came near, the poor wretch who was signaling regained his manhood. He *was* a decoy and his Indian captors lay in ambush just above him. He called out: "Indians! Keep away! Indians!" Then he whirled around, held out his hands, and cried: "Bear-Who-Walks! Don't shoot me!" A rifle cracked. He fell with a bullet through his brain. Jim put the great sweep hard-a-port. Hans and Juan dug viciously with their oars. Slowly the "Betsey" gathered way, but the thicket above the dead man spurted fire and bullets plowed their way through the boat. Tom and Smith were firing as rapidly as they could, when there was a yell from Jim. The "Betsey" yawed about. She was no longer being steered. Tom bounded into the cabin and seized the sweep. Jim lay there, apparently lifeless, covered with flour from a broken barrel, the stave of which had been torn off by a bullet. The boat was speedily under control and was soon out of danger. Tom gave the sweep to Smith and knelt over Jim's

body. To his amazement, the body showed signs of life. As a matter of fact, Jim had been only stunned, not really hurt at all. As he came to his senses, he saw his hands covered with flour, and gave a cry of utter joy.

“ Bress the Lord, bress de Lord, I’s e dun turned white ! ”

They had to undeceive him, but he was consoled at finding himself alive after all. In half an hour he was at work again. But it had been a narrow escape. The bullet had grazed his head, producing a temporary paralysis. An eighth of an inch nearer would have meant death. When wild horses roamed our prairies, a first-class shot would sometimes stun and capture them by “ creasing ” them with a bullet. Washington Irving’s “ Tour on the Prairies ” tells of such a capture. That is a book that every American boy ought to read.

Ten days from Pittsburg, they came to the chief danger Nature had put in the way of river traffic,—the rapids of the Ohio. A canal has long since been cut around them, but in the early days it took strength and skill to carry an unwieldy boat safely

through the rushing waters, safely by the gleaming rocks that appeared one minute and disappeared the next, in the whirl of the waves. Smith and Juan took charge here. They showed both strength and skill and did their duty thoroughly well, as they had in the skirmish with the Indians. They looked on the boat as their own predestined prey and did not mean to have man or Nature pluck it from them. They took the oars. Hans was steersman. Tom stood amidships. Smith called out orders, which Tom bellowed back to Hans. It was hard to hear in that fury of waters.

“Port! Starboard! Hard-a-lee! Starboard, quick!”

So the cries rang out. Hans, naked to the waist, great knots of muscles standing out on his back and arms, put all his gigantic strength into every movement of the long sweep. All his strength was needed. More than once, the “Betsey” just cleared the jagged edges of a reef that would have ripped her to pieces, had she touched it. More than once, Tom, peering ahead, thought Smith and Juan were taking them all into the very jaws of

death, but one peril after another was passed and at last the "Lovely Betsey" floated into the placid waters below the conquered rapids. Everybody drew long breaths of relief. Tom congratulated the oarsmen on their skill.

"We wouldn't have had anything happen to you, Captain, for all the world," said Smith. "Would we, Juan?"

"No, indeed," answered the lying Spaniard. "You've done well by us, Captain, and we're your men forever, Don Carlos and I are."

"Thank you," said Tom, but he could not help saying it a little dryly. He fancied that Smith started at his tone and he saw him look sharply at Juan. It would never do to have them suspect that he doubted them. He exerted himself to be cordial. Saying that they all needed rest, he anchored the boat in midstream, and declared for a holiday. An extra good meal was cooked. The mandolin was brought out. There was singing and talking until bed time. Smith and Juan were bidden to sleep all night, as a reward for their prowess that day. Hans and Tom and Jim were to stand

watch in turn. There was not much danger of Indians attacking them in canoes, but such things had sometimes happened. Tom did not mean to be taken unawares. His own watch passed without incident. So did Hans's. The chance was given to Jim to show that a brave heart can beat under a black skin.

It was that darkest hour just before dawn. Jim had been patrolling back and forth, peering through the darkness, seeing nothing and hearing nothing except the soft swish of the current against the square bow. He walked back to the cabin, laid down his gun, and picked up an ax to split some wood for the breakfast fire. He felt rather than saw that some one was near him. He turned to see an Indian close upon him, and another climbing over the bow. With a mighty yell of "Injuns!" that brought his four comrades instantly to their feet, he buried his ax in the intruder's head. The man fell like a log, his tomahawk clattering upon the deck. Jim seized the tomahawk and dashed at the second Indian, who was now hastily clambering up the front of the boat. As the four white men

rushed out of the cabin, they saw in the dim light of the coming dawn the Indian rise to his feet and draw back his tomahawk. They saw Jim jump straight at him. They saw the two clinch, sway, and fall forward into the river. There was a crash, some savage yells, and silence—then the sound of swift swimming. The negro and the Indian had fallen together on a canoe with half a dozen savages in it and overturned it. Here and there a head showed above the water. The whites were afraid to fire, lest they should kill the brave negro. A hoarse whisper reassured them.

“I’se hyar, Massa, a-clingin’ to de anchor-rope.”

Jim’s black head bobbed up close to the boat. A merciless fire was opened on the swimmers. They dived often and the darkness favored them, but the body of the savage Jim had killed was not the only one that floated down the Ohio that morning. The gallant darky was hauled aboard. He still held the tomahawk he had captured.

“I wuz pow’ful fri’tened, massa Captain,” he explained, “but I shuah dun my bestest.”

"You saved all our lives, Jim," answered Tom. "There isn't one of us that doesn't owe his life to you."

"And this is the man," he thought, "that those two scoundrels are plotting to sell into slavery; most surely Hans and I will save him." He ordered the anchor pulled aboard. The boat was turned downstream, the dead Indian was flung overboard, the bloodstains washed out, and the rude breakfast cooked. Hans and Smith bent to the oars as if anxious to escape from the spot marked by such a tragedy. This was their last Indian skirmish. Next day they were within the zone of the old French villages in what is now southern Illinois. Neither the French nor the Spanish ever had any real Indian troubles, while every mile of American progress to the West was marked with war. The chief reason for this difference is that the French and Spanish settlements were made under the direction of their governments, on a small scale, and after treaties with the Indians. Moreover, these treaties were kept. Our settlements were made by individuals or by colonization companies that grabbed

great stretches of Indian land for a few guns, some gaudy handkerchiefs, or a lot of cheap beads. When our Government made treaties, it usually broke them. If it did not, its citizens did. The Frenchman tilled a few acres and made friends with his savage neighbors. The pioneer would have no savage neighbors. He drove them away. There was truth in the complaint of the Cherokees:

“We are driven as it were into the sea. We have hardly land sufficient to stand upon. We are neither fish nor birds. We cannot live in the water nor in the air.”

Half a century later, in 1838, when James Russell Lowell graduated from Harvard, his class poem, which he could not deliver because he was rusticated, said:

“Can ye not hear where on the Southern breeze
Swells the last wailing of the Cherokees?

.
‘We must go, for already more near and more near
The tramp of the paleface falls thick on the ear.’”

It was almost half a century later still, before we began to treat the Cherokees justly. If you would know part of the long story of Indian wrongs, read

“A Century of Dishonor,” by Helen Hunt Jackson (H. H.).

However, all danger from Indians ceased for our party before the “Lovely Betsey” floated from the Ohio, the beautiful river, into the Father-of-Waters, the Mississippi, the majestic river. The danger from the Spaniard was still to be met. So was the more deadly danger from within, the danger from Smith and Juan. Natchez was but three days away. Tom decided that the time for action had come. He took Hans aside, swore him to secrecy, told him of the treachery of their two comrades, and with some difficulty kept him from knocking them senseless, then and there. When he explained to Hans what he intended to do, the giant was delighted. Nothing was said to Jim, for fear of his being unable to keep the secret. Tom knew Jim would follow him to the death, if need be.

The next morning, bright and early, the “Lovely Betsey” piled herself upon a sandbar in the middle of the river. She had to be dug off. Hans’s spade struck something that was not sand. It turned out to be a bit of sheet-lead. There were almost illegible

markings upon it. Tom's young eyes finally made them out. They were:

A N D O
O T O

Below the OTO was a half oval, with some design scratched within it of which no one could make head or tail. They had all gathered about the queer find and were eagerly discussing it. Juan suggested that he had seen in New Orleans the armorial bearings of the Grandees who ruled Louisiana hung upon the outer walls of the Palacio de Gobernación,—the Government Palace,—and that the marks which puzzled them might be the right-hand half of some coat-of-arms. This suggestion was accepted, in default of a better. The relic was taken aboard before the “Lovely Betsey” was pried off into deep water. It still meant nothing to them, for they did not know the history of the discovery of the Mississippi, but it might have meant a great deal to wiser men, if it had ever reached civilization. It may have been part of the burial-wrappings of Hernando de Soto, the gallant Spaniard who first of all white men saw the Mississippi. He discovered it

in 1541, seventy-nine years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, sixty-eight years before Hendrik Hudson sailed past Manhattan Island.

Hernando de Soto had grown rich with Pizarro in Peru. He returned to Spain and asked leave to



HERNANDO DE SOTO

conquer Florida, at his own expense, for the King. The flattered monarch made him Governor of Cuba and of all the countries he should subdue. In 1539, he sailed from Spain, with six hundred volunteers, all "in the bloom of life." He was to lead most of them to death. Leaving his wife to govern Cuba, he left Havana with a thousand men, of whom three

hundred were horsemen. The little army landed at Tampa Bay. The ships were sent back, as Cortez had sent back from Mexico the ships he did not burn. The long march began. There was great store of provisions. There was a mighty drove of pigs, to furnish fresh food on the way. There were cards, for "leisure time in gaming." There were a dozen priests, that "the festivals of the Church might be kept." There were chains for the Indians to be captured. There were bloodhounds to track them. Some Florida Indians were impressed as guides and bidden to lead the Spaniards to the gold that was their god. One simple fellow said he did not know where gold was to be found. He was promptly burned at the stake, as a lesson to the others. They led the Spaniards northward, perhaps because they had heard of the petty gold mines of North Carolina. Then they turned westward. At Mobile, they burned an Indian town. The flames spread to their own luggage and consumed most of it. They wintered drearily in northern Mississippi. By this time the gay cavalcade was no longer gay. It had been "brilliant in silks and glittering armor."

Now it was fain to cover its nakedness with skins and mats woven of ivy. The simple Indians brought De Soto their lame and blind that he might touch them and so make them walk and see. Instead he made the able-bodied his slaves. Weary of wandering, sick at heart, he died on the banks of the great river in 1541.

It is recorded that when he was laid to rest, his body was wrapped in a leaden sheet, upon which his name and his coat-of-arms were graven. Then the wooden coffin, weighted with stones, was lowered into the river he had discovered, to the end that the Indians should not find and desecrate his grave. It is possible that Hans found a part of De Soto's leaden winding-sheet. We shall see what became of it.

That night, when they were floating without oars down the stream, Smith began talking of the good hunting to be had on shore.

“Why not stop to-morrow and shoot a bit, Captain? If you're as tired of salt meat and fresh fish as I am, you'll be glad of a change. I know a point down below, just about where we'll be by sunrise.

The high land comes down to the river. There's an old Indian trail that goes back into the country and swings around to Natchez. If you and Rolf went inland for a while you could get plenty of wild turkey and perhaps a deer or a bear. They'd taste good, wouldn't they? Juan and Jim and I could clean ship while you're gone, so the 'Lovely Betsey' would make a good show for herself, when we round the bend into Natchez."

"That seems a good idea," Tom replied. "By the way, when ought we to reach Natchez?"

"About sun-up, day after to-morrow."

"How long does it take to get there by the trail you mentioned?"

"A good four days. It winds around a lot."

"Well, we will make the landing. You and Juan can take the oars in the morning, and put us into the high point when you see it. Hans and I would like some shooting, wouldn't we, Hans?"

"Yah, if ve shoots at de right ding."

"You'll find the right thing to aim at, Rolf," said Smith.

"I bets ve do," replied Hans.

He was to stand the second watch that night and Tom the third. When Tom came to relieve him, they went over their plan for the morning, in low tones.

“ I vish you lets me kill dem both,” pleaded Hans.

“ No,” said Tom. “ They are not to be killed, but they’ll be a pair of footsore scoundrels before they ever reach Natchez. When I cover Juan and say, ‘ Hands up!’ you cover Smith and make him put his up, too.”

“ I knocks him down pretty quick alretty,” answered Hans, “ if he don’t put dem up. I guess he vill, ven he sees my gun.”

CHAPTER X

IT was a lovely morning, a day of peace and sunshine, by no means fit for the "treasons, stratagems, and spoils" the two scoundrels had in mind, as they pulled the "Betsey" athwart the current and brought her up to a point of land, crowned with live-oaks, that thrust itself far into the river. They were at the oars, Jim at the rudder-sweep.

"Here we are, Captain," shouted Smith, as the bow slid up the sandy shore. "Shall I fasten her?"

"All right."

He jumped upon the bank, took a turn of a rope around a big tree, made fast, and climbed back into the boat as Tom and Hans came out of the cabin, rifles in hand, apparently ready to go ashore to hunt. Smith and Juan were full of secret, unholy glee. They felt sure of the success of their wicked plan. Tom and Hans would go inland; the conspirators would start down-stream with the boat,

telling Jim the hunters were going to Natchez by land. General Wilkinson's letter, which nestled so securely in Juan's breast-pocket, would get them safely by Natchez. At New Orleans, they would sell boat and cargo and divide the spoils. Part of the cargo sold would be Jim. He had served them faithfully. He had saved their lives when the Indians crept aboard the boat. He had a right to be free. All that mattered nothing to them. They could get twelve hundred milled Spanish dollars for Jim. That fact settled his fate in their eyes. They were in most excellent good humor with themselves and with the future as they imagined it was going to be. That future suddenly changed.

"Hands up!" said Tom, and covered Juan with his rifle.

"Hans bup!" shouted Hans as his rifle covered Smith.

The four hands went up. Juan, cowed by a long-forgotten conscience, cowered, but Smith tried to bluff. He laughed, though uneasily, and asked:

"What's the joke?"

“There is no joke,” answered Tom. “Jim, come here. Tie up Juan.”

Jim, who was staring open-eyed at the scene, stumbled forward.

“You mean it, massa Captain? You mean it?”

“Yes, I mean it. Tie him up. Put that rope on him!”

As Jim advanced with the rope, Hans turned to see what was going on. Smith instantly dashed at him, but Hans, dropping his gun, met the attack with a swinging blow, straight from the shoulder. Smith went down and out. When he came to his senses, he was in a mesh of rope. Juan had already been bound, hand and foot. The two scamps lay on the deck, trussed like pigs.

“Now I will tell you,” said Tom, “why you have been treated in this fashion and what is going to be done with you. You two, who pretended never to have met before you came together on this boat, are old friends. You conspired together to take the trip, to leave Hans and me on the shore or to kill us, to steal the boat and her cargo, to sell them as your own, and to divide the plunder. More than

this, you conspired to sell poor Jim into slavery in Louisiana."

"No, massa Captain, Juan he tole me I wuz goin' to get good wages. I ain't no slave, massa. I'se free."

Jim's interruption was brief. Tom went on.

"I overheard your wicked plot the first night out from Pittsburg. I have known it ever since. What have you to say for yourselves?"

"I have to say that you're dreaming, Captain," Smith replied. "We never thought of doing the things you say. Did we, Juan?"

"No, never, never," said Juan.

"Why did you, Juan, get a letter from General Wilkinson, telling Gayoso to pass you and *your* boat down to New Orleans?"

"I never did."

"The letter is in your breast-pocket. I shall take it out and read it presently."

Juan's sallow face turned a green white.

"You shan't read anything of mine," he protested. "If I got a letter from the General, it was

just to make things easy for you, if Gayoso tried to interfere with you. It was kindness to you, that's what it was."

"We'll see," said Tom, and began to search the Spaniard, who shrieked curses at him during the process. It revealed a good deal. There were two letters from Wilkinson to Gayoso in Juan's breast-pocket. Tom read them both aloud. The first said that the bearer was a friend of the writer and was to be allowed to take his boat to New Orleans, "under my arrangement with Governor-General Miró." The second went more into detail. It said:

"Your and my good friend, the young Señor Juan Gregorio, is taking his boat, the 'Lovely Betsey,' to New Orleans. Please permit her and her cargo to pass untouched. He has with him his and our friend, Don Carlos Smith, who will give you news of the loyalty of some of us to His Most Christian Majesty, the King of Spain. He takes also a negro named Jim, who is for sale. Perhaps Your Excellency may like to buy him. Don Juan

tells me Jim is well worth twelve hundred Spanish dollars. I am, Señor Commandante,

“Your affectionate and assured servant,

“JAMES WILKINSON.”

“What have you to say now?” asked Tom.

“Did that writin’ say fer shuah, massa Captain, dat I wuz to be sold?—sold into slavery?” cried Jim.

“Yes, it said so.”

“You won’t let him sell me, massa, you won’t let him, will you?”

Jim crouched before Tom in abject terror.

“You will not be sold. You will stay free. You will go home with me. Stop! Stop, I say!”

Jim had fallen flat on his face and was kissing Tom’s boots.

“You’ve dun sabed me, massa Captain. Glory to God, I’s e sabed!”

Here Smith began to speak. He had had time to collect his wits and had decided that his own best chance was to cut loose from Juan.

“Captain, I don’t wonder you suspected me, see-

ing me going so much with Juan, but I never imagined he was a bad boy. I've been in no plot. Now I'll tell you——"

"Ah, *caramba*," shrieked the Spaniard, "you will tell, will you? You never plotted with me? You'll try to save your neck by wringing mine, will you? Captain, he made me sign a contract with him. He wouldn't take my word, the word of a *hidalgo*. He has it on him, now. Find it and read it. Ah! ha!" He yelled with demoniac laughter. "Look at him! Look at the good Don Carlos, who didn't know I was a bad boy! Look at him!"

Don Carlos was not a pleasant person to look at just then. He was glaring at Juan with the kind of hate that longs to kill. He kept a sullen silence when Tom asked him whether he had such a contract upon him. It was speedily found. It ran like this:

"Strong and Rolf are to be got rid of. Boat and cargo are to be sold. Also Jim. Half receipts boat, cargo, and Jim, go to each of us.

CARLOS SMITH.
JUAN GREGORIO."

It was dated the day Jim had saved their lives.

The case against the conspirators was now complete. Neither of them made any further pretense to innocence. They awaited stolidly their fate, without much hope that it would be anything but death. They knew what vengeance they would have taken, had the positions been reversed. Their judge pronounced sentence.

“Your guns and ammunition and knives we will keep. Your personal belongings will be put on shore, with four days’ provisions. You will be turned loose to walk to Natchez. Perhaps I ought to put you to death. You were ready to put Rolf and me to death, and to put poor old Jim into slavery, a thing worse than death. But you shall go free.”

After a further thorough search of their clothes and of their scanty luggage, the judgment was carried out. The bags and some provisions were put on shore. The two criminals were untied and thrust off the boat upon the bank with rifle-muzzles in their backs. With Tom and Hans still covering them with guns, Jim untied the rope, pushed off

the boat, and sprang into it. The swift current caught it. Tom ran back to the sweep and headed the bow down-stream. The "Lovely Betsey" swept peacefully southward. Two baffled scoundrels on shore glared, now at the boat, now at each other.

Twenty-four hours later a patrol boat from Natchez hailed the "Betsey" and took her in tow. Tom exhibited Wilkinson's formal letter to Gayoso. The captain of the patrol read it. He knew some English, luckily for the three people on the "Betsey," who did not have a word of Spanish between them. He said, however, nothing could go below Natchez without a special order from Gayoso. So the "Betsey" was tied up to the shore at the little town. When Tom and the Spanish captain had climbed the steep bank, under the guns of an eight-sided fort, they found themselves in the village square, the center of the dull life of the fifteen hundred people who lived there. On the Ohio, an American town of fifteen hundred would have been a busy scene. On the Mississippi, the Spanish settlement was as still as if nothing ever had happened or ever would happen there. The "Palace of Gov-

ernment" was a small, shabby, two-story wooden house just north of the town. Thither Tom was taken. A sentry sat on the steps, his uniform in rags, his rusty gun a relic. He waved his hand languidly, when asked for the Governor.

"Pass, friends."

They passed up the rotting stairway and were received by the Governor's secretary, who thought his chief might see them "soon." Then they waited an hour. Then they waited another. Finally they were ushered into the presence of the local potentate. Tom presented to him Wilkinson's first letter. He read it, thought a moment, and said:

"My secretary will give you clearance-papers."

"When may I have them?"

"I think he can find time to attend to it to-morrow morning."

"But I wish to start for New Orleans before noon to-day."

"Quite impossible. We are busy to-day, are we not, Don José?"

"Very busy, Your Excellency."

"You hear, Señor Captain. Pray withdraw now,

that we may attend to pressing affairs. I bid you farewell until to-morrow. Pray give me a cigarette, Don José."

Tom was delighted with the success of his ruse to get by Natchez, but he did not fancy being held up for twenty-four hours. As he went out, he asked the secretary whether he would not take dinner with him at one o'clock on the "Betsey." Don José would be delighted to do so.

"If you should happen to bring with you the clearance-papers," suggested Tom, "I would try to show you how deeply an American would appreciate such courtesy from a hidalgo."

"Ah," said Don José, "you have things to sell on your boat?"

"And things to give to real friends."

"Perhaps, after all, the Governor will have time to sign the clearance papers this morning. I will see what I can do."

"Don José!" It was the Governor who called.

"Your Excellency!"

"Let the American return here for a moment. You and the patrol-captain may retire."

So Tom was ushered in again and left alone with Gayoso. The Governor came straight to the point.

“What is your cargo?”

“Pots, pans, axes and plows, flour and tobacco.”

“There is some scarcity of flour and tobacco here.”

“May I have the pleasure of presenting Your Excellency with five barrels of flour?”

“With ten—you said ten, did you not?—barrels of flour? Since you insist, you may. And I suppose you could spare a half hundred-weight of tobacco.”

“If Your Excellency insists.”

“Insist? I? Oh, no, but the things I have mentioned would be useful. Then, say, half a dozen axes and two plows.”

“I suppose it would be possible to let me sail at once.”

“Certainly it would, when you show such a proper spirit. Don José!” The secretary entered.

“I will put aside our pressing affairs of State and sign the clearance-papers of our American friend. He insists upon leaving with me these things.” He

handed the secretary a list of the contributions he had wrung from Tom. Don José read it aloud.

“Fifteen barrels of flour.”

“Ten,” interrupted Tom.

“Fifteen; I am sure you said fifteen,” said the Governor suavely.

“A hundred-weight of tobacco.”

“Half a hundred-weight.”

“I remember distinctly you said a hundred-weight.”

“A dozen axes and three plows.”

It was useless to protest. Tom turned to go back to the “Betsey.”

“Wait just a moment,” said Don José.

Meanwhile Hans had been wandering about the small town. There was little to see. The sun-baked public square, with never a tree or a blade of grass, was not attractive. There were but two public buildings, the town-hall and nearby the jail. Both were built of logs. Both were one-story. The jail was one room. Both had piazzas facing the square. Both had back doors opening toward the

river. A lazy soldier mounted guard at each. Mounting guard at Natchez meant sitting in the shade of the piazza, with gun laid aside, with no occupation save that of rolling and smoking endless cigarettes. Hans sat down on the jail-piazza and tried to talk to the sentry, but the latter had no English or German. He had, however, the courtesy of his race. He made Hans feel welcome. He grinned amiably at him. He became demonstrative when Hans gave him some tobacco. He gave Hans the Spanish *abrazo* (embrace), which consists in throwing your arms about your friend and patting him on the back. At this Hans gave a roar of good-natured laughter. When he laughed, some one stirred uneasily upon straw within the jail. Then some one spoke feverish, unmeaning words—in English. Hans started. The faint voice sounded half-familiar. Had he ever heard it? What did those ravings in English mean? The sentry scowled, shrugged his shoulders, got up, leaving his gun on the piazza, and strolled into the windowless room, lit only by the two open doors, at front and back. Through the latter, Hans, as he followed

the soldier, saw the "Lovely Betsey" tied up to the bank. Jim was taking a sun-bath on the cabin-roof.

The jail held but one prisoner. He lay on a mass of filthy straw, himself a mass of rags. There was an iron collar about his neck, fastened with padlock and chain to a staple in the wall. Handcuffs were on his wrists. Shackles bound his ankles. He lay there, but half conscious of his suffering, for a friendly fever was doing its best to free him from his body. He stared straight at Hans with unseeing eyes. He muttered:

"Mother Strong! Mother Strong!"

The prisoner was Zed Pratt.

The soldier shambled up to the helpless man, shook his fist at him, and kicked him in the side. Before Zed could moan, the Spaniard could only gurgle. Hans, beside himself with righteous wrath, had clutched him by the throat. He choked him into unconsciousness. Zed was too far gone to know what was going on. There were great goings-on. With a key found in the soldier's pocket, iron collar and handcuffs and shackles fell from the trapper's

weary body. The soldier was stripped, gagged with some of Zed's rags, put in irons, and left covered with the filthy straw where Zed had lain. His ragged uniform was now adorning the trapper. Hans bent over his friend, tears rolling down his face.

"Zed! You knows me. You knows Hans. You comin' mit me. Come!"

Hans raised him to his feet. He could scarcely stand. Alone, he could not have walked a step. He did not recognize Hans. He did not know what was happening. But he dimly realized that he was being helped. He clung to the giant. Together they stumbled out of the back door and started to climb down the bank. The chances of discovery were a hundred to one against them, but the one chance proved good. It was high noon. The hot southern sun beat upon the bank. No one had ventured beyond the shade that roofs and piazzas gave. No one saw them. Half-walking, half-carried, Zed reached the "Lovely Betsey" in Hans's arms. With Jim's eager help, he was carried into the cabin. The tell-tale uniform was taken off him. He was

laid on the mattress in a dark corner. Tobacco-leaves, hastily plucked from where they swung below the cabin-roof, were piled over him, hiding all of him but his face. A sense of peace stole over him. His clouded brain cleared a little. His dauntless spirit had never been broken. He did not yet remember Hans, but he knew he was a friend. He faintly smiled. Hans bent over him, saying:

“Zed, go sleep. Stay still, very still. There’s danger, but Tom’s comin’.”

“Tom?” whispered the old trapper, “my boy Tom?”

“Yes, Tom. I’m Hans. Tom’s comin’.”

The wonderful news was too much for the worn-out man. He could speak not a word more. He lay still, with a smile on his brave lips. Then Hans and Jim put a basket upside down over the old trapper’s face and covered the basket with more tobacco-leaves. Zed could breathe, and could not be seen.

Hans heard voices outside. As he came out of the cabin, Tom and Don José came down the bank together. The secretary had kept the boy-captain

waiting barely ten minutes and had brought the clearance-papers, duly signed. There was no chance for a whispered word now between Tom and Hans. The former could not yet be told what priceless freight the "Lovely Betsey" held. He had the Governor's plunder unloaded. He found that Don José expected an ax and a barrel of flour for himself. Don José received them. He called loudly and three or four men began to straggle down the bank to carry away the spoils. Then Don José himself turned and entered the cabin. Hans's heart stood still. He felt that he simply could not bear to have Zed discovered now. To his simple mind there came the thought of a card to play. He knew that yellow fever was the scourge of the Spaniard on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. At Vera Cruz always, at Havana often, at New Orleans sometimes, the yellow peril killed. When New Orleans was infected, the dread disease was apt to creep up the Mississippi, taking its toll of lives at every tiny town. The Spaniards called it "*el vómito*." They were afraid of very few things, but "*el vómito*" was the chiefest of these.

Don José was complimenting Tom upon the amount of freight the "Lovely Betsey" could carry. He took a step towards the heap of tobacco-leaves where Zed lay hidden.

"Truly, my friend," he said, "with all these leaves hanging and with all these piled here, you could spare me an armful from this heap, could you not?"

"They are yours, Don José," answered Tom, striving mightily to conceal his disgust. "Take what you will."

"Come here, Miguel," commanded Don José, "and pick up these leaves for me."

Miguel clambered from the bank to the boat.

Then Hans, whose lightest step was heavy enough to shake the whole craft, came stumbling heavily into the cabin and flung himself, groaning, between Don José and the heap of tobacco.

"I'm sick, Captain," he said; "very sick. I'm afraid I've the yellow fever."

"*El vómito!*" shrieked Don José.

"El vómito!" yelled Miguel.

They fled in utter terror. The men on the bank ran too. The Governor's plunder was left untouched and unguarded.

"I ain't sick, Captain. Not a bit. Get away, quick! This minute!"

Hans had scarcely spoken, when Don José shouted, from a safe distance:

"Go away! The fort will fire on you, if you do not leave instantly!"

There was no thought of Don José staying to dinner now. There was no chance of his discovering Zed now. The "Lovely Betsey" was hastily cast off. By one o'clock, she was some miles south of Natchez. As Washington had said he would, Tom had learned something. He had learned that the Spaniard took heavy toll, even when he let a boat go by. He doubted, however, whether that knowledge was worth the flour, tobacco, axes, and plows it had cost.

And now he learned something more. Hans told him the marvelous story of the finding and rescue of Zed. He could not believe it until the tobacco-

leaves were put aside, the upturned basket lifted, and he saw with his own eyes Zed lying there wasted and worn, but sound asleep and smiling in his sleep. Tom sat beside him a moment. Happy tears filled his eyes.

“God bless you, Hans, dear friend.”

Then they took to their oars and rowed mightily.

That night they ran upon a sandbar. The river was falling, for the sun had not yet melted on the Rocky Mountains the snow that was later to pour a yellow flood down the Mississippi into the Gulf. It took them five days to get off.

With the first morning consciousness came back to Zed, for a while. He was too weak to tell anything about himself, or to be told anything about them. He knew he was with them, safe, no longer in rags and chains, but tended with loving care. When they were not toiling to float the boat, they sat by him. He scarcely spoke. At least he spoke few words. His eyes said many things. But most of the time he lay still, half-conscious.

The five days' delay came near costing them dear.

The "Lovely Betsey" was scarcely afloat when a patrol-boat, built for speed and manned by four stout oarsmen, rushed around a point just above them. The patrol-captain and Smith and Juan, crouching in the bow with rifles in their hands, opened fire the moment they were within range. There was no hail, no parley before the attack. Smith and Juan had stumbled, footsore, into Natchez; had told Gayoso (already fiercely angry over the jail-delivery) how he had been duped; had offered him half of everything in the boat, including Jim, in return for help from him; and had been given command of a patrol-boat and its crew. Jim kept at the rudder-sweep of the "Betsey." It would have been fatal to run aground then. Zed lay helpless. Tom and Hans sprang to the cabin portholes and fired again and again. Still the boat rushed towards them. In another minute the "Betsey" would have been boarded. But this was not to be. A big snag lay just beneath the surface. The patrol-boat, urged on by eight stout arms, struck it full and square. The boat crumpled into splinters. Oarsmen and riflemen were thrown in a heap into the

turbid water, caught in a fierce whirlpool, sucked down to death. Not a single one came to the surface. It was a horrible sight, but it spelled safety to Tom and Zed and Hans and Jim.

“Dose gemmen won’t neber sell me into slabery now,” said Jim.

Hans’s bullet-pouch was nearly empty. So was Tom’s. Jim said he could make bullets from some old lead he had, and was bidden to go ahead. And that is why no antiquarian ever studied Hernando de Soto’s leaden winding-sheet. That night, when the “Betsey” was anchored and Tom and Hans were sound asleep, the old negro melted all they had of it into bullets, which he proudly exhibited in the morning.

“There’s no use crying over spilt lead,” said Tom. While he had no idea of the possible value of what Hans had found, he had intended to take it home with him and show it to some learned person, perhaps to Alexander Hamilton, perhaps to a professor in the Columbia College, which had been King’s College a few years before. Now that it was gone, he forbore to tell Jim he had wished to keep

it. Why shadow the pride of nice old Jim in his nice new bullets?

Bit by bit, Zed came back to life. The wasted cheeks filled out. The old fire came into his eyes. He could move about, but as yet he could handle neither oar nor gun. They told him their story, by degrees. At last the day came when he could tell them his. This is what had happened to Zed.

He had run infinite risks with infinite care. His carefulness had carried him and his canoe in safety to Lake Superior. So far, he had dodged Indians and English soldiers and the French voyageurs and the Scotch trappers of the dreaded Hudson's Bay Company,—“The Company” it was called from the St. Lawrence to the Columbia. Across a continent, it was lord of life and death. It made men in London rich with its furs. It killed whatever men in America tried to take furs without its permission within its preserves or ventured to spy out the mighty land it ruled.

It was Zed's habit to paddle by night, to sleep by day. One night when the sky was dark with storm-

clouds, his canoe was creeping across a great bay on the northern shore of Superior. A sudden hurricane snapped the paddle in his hand and drove him far out into the inland sea. Day broke upon his helplessness. His tossing canoe was sighted by a Hudson Bay Company's *bateau*. The French had lost Canada, but a big boat was still called a *bateau*. It bore down upon him. He was taken on board. His canoe was towed astern. His pretense of being one of "the Company's" men was riddled by the keen questions of the Scotchman in command. His belongings were seized. He was placed under guard. Two days afterwards he was landed at the Company's post at the head of the Lake. His trial began forthwith. Short shrift was given him.

"The old factor," said Zed, "sat at one end of a long table in his house inside the fort. They call their chiefs 'factors.' He was a big, upstandin' man, with a face red as brandy could make it and a hand like a ham. He talked gentlelike, but he didn't look thataway one bit. There was a lot o' men 'round him, all sorts o' men, Scotchmen, English, half-breeds, French, but they all acted as if they

belonged to him, and he just sat there and played king. After he'd asked me some questions and I hadn't answered 'em, he smiled—I hope I'll never see anybody smile thataway again—and said: 'Ye'll be sent back to Detroit. Ye can git home from there. James, ye take him on your *bateau* to-morrow. The furs'll be put on it at the Two-Mile Point.' 'Yes, sir,' sez this man James. He was a pretty nice-lookin' man, but just then he looked as if he was seein' a ghost. And he gave a kind of shiver. I knew mighty well what the old factor meant. I was to be taken out o' earshot of the fort and quietly shot. But o' course I didn't let on that I knew. I hadn't bin shot yit and p'r'aps I could get out of it. 'Tenny rate, I meant to try.'

He was at once relieved of arrest. The fort was free to him. His goods were restored to him. That afternoon he was invited to join in sundry sports. In a shooting-match he won a beaver-skin. At night he supped with the factor, by special invitation. It was an honor few of the others shared. The half-dozen men at the rude feast made much of him. It was a wild carouse for all but the temperate trap-

per. The evening ended with everybody singing "Auld Lang Syne." They stood in a circle, hand in hand with the man they knew was to be murdered on the morrow.

"Good-night, Pratt," said the factor. "You'll be off early i' the morn. *Bon voyage*, as these French fellows say."

"Thank ye for all your kindness to me," said Zed, sturdily. "Good-night."

He slept on priceless furs that night. At day-break he was called. He breakfasted with James, eating heartily himself, rallying his host on his lack of appetite.

"I tell ye, Tom," he exclaimed, "I just knew I was goin' to git out of it."

While they were breakfasting James told an Indian to take Mr. Pratt's gun and stores to the *bateau*. Protest would have been useless. He had to submit to being thus disarmed. Then they started on foot for Two-Mile Point, so named for its distance from the fort. There were half a dozen in the party, all white men. Evidently there was to be no Indian witness of the killing of the American.

The woodland path led southward. Its narrowness made them walk in Indian file. Zed was fifth in the line. James brought up the rear. The Englishman was sick at heart over the murder he had been ordered to commit. He had learned "Thou shalt not kill" at his mother's knee in the nursery of a stately home in Devonshire. His wild life in America had not marred his memory or stifled his conscience. Born a gentleman, he had stayed one. Zed had read James aright. Suddenly he turned to him and whispered:

"Are ye that factor's slave that ye mean to murder me 'cause he told you to?"

"I can't," said the tortured Englishman, with white lips. "I can't. At the next turn, take to the woods to the right. I'll fire and run to the left. I'll do no murder, factor or no factor."

When the path doubled to the left and the four men ahead had turned the corner and could no longer look back at the two men behind, Zed slipped noiselessly into the high underbrush at the west of the trail. A second or two afterwards, he heard James shout:

“Halt! Halt, or I’ll fire!”

“Bang!” went the Englishman’s gun, aimed in the wrong direction. Then the Englishman ran to the east, shouting to his companions that their prisoner had run, calling to them to join in the hunt for him. The five big men were plunging like elephants eastward through the forest, while Zed was running like a deer to the west. There was no danger now that they could track the trapper. He was free, but he was alone in a wilderness of savage beasts and of more savage men. His only weapon was a knife.

“There was some days, son,” said Zed, “when I lived chiefly on bark. Bark’s fillin’, but ’tain’t real good eatin’. Then I caught a muskrat. I lived on him for two days, but I don’t hanker after no more muskrats, long’s I live. Then an Injun caught me.”

The trapper had waked one morning to find an Indian covering him with a gun. The savage had taken his knife while he slept. He motioned to Zed to go through the forest ahead of him. The white man marched forward to what he supposed

was certain death. The march ended in a lovely glade, where a squaw and two children peeked out of a wigwam.

"Sit here," said the Indian, pointing to the foot of a far-spreading tree. Zed promptly obeyed. Then the captor's wife brought food to the captive. Presently, at her husband's command, she bathed and bound up Zed's bleeding feet.

"Once I told ye, Tom," the trapper's tale proceeded, "that the only good Injun was a dead Injun. Well, I was most mortally wrong. The Pine Tree—that was this Injun's name—was as good a man as God ever made. We managed to talk together a bit. As far as I could make out, a white man had done somethin' fine for him and Mrs. Pine Tree the year before—saved 'em from somethin' bad—and had told him to pay him by takin' care o' the next white Pine Tree run across. I was that next white. I stayed with the Pine Tree family most a month. Then I struck off for the Mississippi, food in my pack, knife at my belt—and Pine Tree offered me his gun. Think o' that, Tom, his only gun. Of course I wouldn't take it. Good

luck to Mr. and Mrs. Pine Tree and both them little Pine Tree papposes, forever, amen."

Tom and Hans echoed that hearty prayer.

"I struck the Mississippi," continued the trapper, "and I got on a log and headed down-stream for St. Louis. I reckoned I could get an outfit there and start off 'cross country for that big river Mr. Astor said must be there. 'Twas a long drift to St. Louis. Many's the time I wisht I had one of them steamboats Rumsey and a boy I know used to make. But when I got there, I was worse off'n when I was alone on the Mississippi. I told the Spanish commandant just how I come there—'course I said nothin' 'bout where I meant to go—and he thought I was lyin' and was a British spy. He sent me down to Natchez a prisoner and I lay there in jail I dunno how long. It seemed like years. They chained me and they starved me and they kicked me. When the fever came, I was glad. I just longed to die. And then old Hans here, he come along. He saved me and he brought me to you, son. God bless him!"

The old trapper sank back, exhausted. Exposure, imprisonment, starvation had worn him to skin and

bone. He still thought he could start westward from New Orleans and so make good his agreement with John Jacob Astor. Tom and Hans knew better. Zed's days in the open were over. The last act in the drama of his life was drawing near. It was to be a peaceful and a happy last act.

"Home is waiting for you, Zed," Tom used to say; "the old home on Broad Street. And 'Mother Strong' is waiting for you. Hans says you were calling for her in your fever. Be sure she heard that call. You are going home with me. It's your home, too."

At first Zed used to protest. He must do what Mr. Astor had told him to do. He must get into the open. He couldn't live in a house. But he gradually came to know that his iron strength was not to return. He promised to go back with Tom "for a visit." Perhaps he might stay "quite some time."

They spent long days on their southern journey. By night they tied up, but by day they rowed and drifted by unpeopled shores, chiefly swamps. Great

cypress trees held masses of Spanish moss swaying in the soft air. Armies of pelicans, gorged with fish, sat in long, stolid lines. Alligators swarmed on every sandbar. Sometimes a deer broke through a canebrake, or a 'possum hung sleepily from a tree, or a bear shouldered his black bulk through a thicket. But it was chiefly a waste of waters, monotonous, unending. There was not one sign of human life. They could scarcely believe their eyes when the first trim houses of the French settlers north of New Orleans began to appear. There were fields and there were fences. Wreaths of smoke rose from the chimneys. Oxen dragged plows through pastures that were being broken up for cane. Horsemen were galloping to and fro. Pretty girls looked shyly from shady verandas at the oddly-shaped tub from Pittsburg, a sight almost never seen in those waters. Few Kentucky boats had ever gotten by the long arm Gayoso stretched out from Natchez to bar the free navigation of the Mississippi. The "Lovely Betsey" swung around the northern end of the great curve where New Orleans still lies, below the surface of the river, walled in

by levees that hold back the flood which always threatens her and always makes her thrive. It is that curve which gives her the name of the Crescent City. When Tom and his friends saw her, she had about five thousand people. They were chiefly French, and the ways of the town were of a delightful gaiety. However, the somber Spaniard ruled them. Above the old Government House, which is still one of the sights of New Orleans, the red-and-yellow flag of Spain stirred gently in the heavy air. The town was a piece of the Old World set down bodily in the New. To-day there is nothing in Paris as French as the old French Quarter of New Orleans. Tom and Zed and Hans were deeply impressed by what they saw. Jim looked at it all with the good-natured, happy-go-lucky carelessness of his race. He was in Tom's care. That was enough for him. So he thought about nothing with great persistence, while Tom thought about his approaching interview with Miró, the ruler of Louisiana, from the mouth of the Mississippi to the sources of the Missouri.

As a matter of fact, the interview was not at all

alarming. A sentinel had been posted on the "Lovely Betsey," as soon as she was moored, and all trading was strictly forbidden until the Governor's pleasure should be known. The sentinel turned out to be a German who had drifted into the Spanish army. He and Hans fired volleys of their common language at each other, to the intense delight of both. He asked many questions about their journey. Hans, who had learned caution, answered with apparent frankness, but said never a word about Charles Smith or Juan Gregorio. The embargo on trading turned out to Tom's great profit. The merchants of New Orleans were eager to buy up this treasure-trove of tobacco, hardware, and flour. The enforced delay whetted their eagerness. When Tom was permitted to sell, the bidding for his goods was fast and furious. He made so much money that when he turned in his accounts at Philadelphia, in May of that notable year 1787, after Washington had received his investment and interest and half the profits, nearly \$3,000 was left for Tom. In those days \$3,000 was a good deal. A gorgeously-clad aide-de-camp came to the levee to

take Tom up to Government House, but Miró was simple in garb and speech, a fine example of the best of the Spanish Grandee. He received the boy-captain with stately courtesy, assured him that Gayoso's clearance-papers were in proper form, and gave orders that the American should be free to sell. When he heard that General Washington was the real owner of the venture, his interest was great.

"He is to be the king of your country, is he not?"

"We wish no king, Your Excellency."

"No people can be ruled without one or be happy without one," said the loyal Spaniard. "I know he is to be your king. General Wilkinson told me so. Will General Wilkinson be king of Kentucky?"

It was hard not to laugh at the idea of a king ruling the free frontiersmen of Kentucky, but Tom kept his face straight and said there would be no royal robes for Wilkinson. Miró had made up his mind, however, and was not to be convinced.

"You are—pardon me, Señor—perhaps too young to know of such weighty matters. When you reach

home (God send you safe journey) you will find your Washington king east of the Alleghany Mountains, and on this side General Wilkinson will either be king or else one of the chief servants of the greatest of all kings, His Most Christian Majesty of Spain, whom may God preserve."

"Every American wishes well to your king, Your Excellency. We have not forgotten what Spain and France did for us when we were facing England alone."

"'Tis well said, Señor Captain. I am your debtor for the saying of it. Now tell me, have you any complaint against my lieutenant at Natchez, Señor Gayoso?"

"I make no complaint, Your Excellency."

"Nay, but I have heard of his levying tribute outside of the law. Did any of your lading stay perchance at Natchez, at his behest?"

"Señor Gayoso was kind enough to give me my clearance-papers the day I arrived, Your Excellency. He and his secretary were busy on other matters, so when they attended so promptly to mine, I made them a trifling present."

“Was it so trifling? What did they take from you?”

Tom, fairly cornered, repeated the list he knew by heart,—the list of sixteen barrels of flour, a hundred-weight of tobacco, thirteen axes, and three plows.

“You have all such things for sale here?”

“Yes, Your Excellency.”

“Come back here when you have sold them and tell me what prices you get for them. Until tomorrow, Señor Captain.”

Tom was bowed out and escorted back to the “Lovely Betsey” by the gorgeous aide-de-camp, now most obsequious to the young man His Excellency the Governor had treated with such honor. Word was sent out that cargo and boat were for sale. There was instantly a crowd at the levee. Prices Tom had never dreamed of asking were freely offered and promptly paid. The “Lovely Betsey” sold for ten times what she cost. Lumber and nails were precious commodities in New Orleans. If the town had been American, a dozen sawmills would have been turning out lumber nearby, but

under the stifling rule of Spain no sawmill could be started without formal permission from the Council of the Indies; and getting a permit cost ten times as much as installing a mill. An applicant was fortunate if his petition was answered within three years of the making of it.

When Miró was told of the prices obtained, he figured out what Gayoso's and Don José's stealings amounted to, at New Orleans figures, and gave Tom an order on the treasury for that sum.

"There has been some slight delay," he explained, "in the payment of salaries in this province. Doubtless His Majesty has been too busy with affairs of greater moment to trouble himself about our poor concerns. A few days ago, however, I received orders to pay Señor Gayoso his salary for year before last. I have had no opportunity as yet to remit it, and now I shall deduct from it what he and his secretary took from you. It is not to be permitted that a servant of my king should rob King George Washington. Make me out a receipt, my American friend, and I will send it to

Natchez in place of the hard dollars which you receive. Ah, ha, Señor Gayoso will find that he is watched; that I have righted your wrongs at his hands."

As Tom now received New Orleans prices for the goods Gayoso had taken and as Natchez prices for Kentucky goods were much less, Tom had the satisfaction, not only of making a handsome profit out of having been robbed, but also of knowing that Gayoso had lost money on each and every item of his thefts.

On one point Miró was obdurate. He had recognized Gayoso's clearance-papers, but he let Tom understand that Gayoso was to issue no more. "There is courtesy between kings," he explained to Tom, "but your king must not try to trade here again, until my king saith that he may. The New Orleans market is only for the subjects of Spain."

"How is it, then, that General Wilkinson can trade here?" Tom asked.

It was a blunt and tactless question. Its real answer lay in the archives of Spain, in which, not long ago, Wilkinson's oath of allegiance to the Spanish

Crown was found. Miró put the question by with grave courtesy.

“There are some things, my young American friend, which it is better not to ask.”

Tom, abashed, begged the Grandee's pardon and received it in a kindly smile. That night he and Hans slept in a bed for the first time in six weeks, Zed for the first time in six months. Jim stretched on the floor at their feet like a big Newfoundland. A few days afterwards all four sailed in a packet for Havana. Spanish law forbade any ship to enter New Orleans unless she flew the Spanish flag and sailed from a Spanish port. This seems absurd to us, but it is no more absurd than the archaic navigation-laws of the United States to-day. Only American ships can sail between American ports. Before they sailed, Tom and Hans had to get new clothes, for Tom had the distinguished honor of being bidden to dine with Governor-General Miró, and Hans, as Tom's friend, was invited to the levée that followed. Zed also was asked, but was not well enough to go. Tom, who had dined with Washington, was not overwhelmed by the event, but honest

Hans rejoiced in the memory of it to the last day of his life. He had a fine military bearing from his service in the German, English, and American armies. He was magnificently built. His great height and his blond coloring made him conspicuous in the throng of short, dark officials born under Spanish skies. The Hessian peasant and Pennsylvania farmer had a simple dignity that made him no unworthy guest of the Spanish Grandee. Hans Rolf was far more conspicuous at the levée than Tom Strong, to Tom's great delight.

At Havana, they took ship for New York.

Hans made Broad Street ring with his joy over seeing "Mutter Strong" again, but left soon for York, where his own mother, wife, and children were as happy over his homecoming as he was. With the wages he had earned and with a handsome bonus Tom gave him, he had almost enough to make his final payment for the improvements on his farm. In fact, he lacked but \$200 and that he borrowed from a New York money-lender, one Ebenezer Shark. Tom indorsed Hans's note to Shark's order for the \$200. In other words, he made himself

liable to pay Hans's debt. But he knew Hans was sure to pay it himself, when the note came due. In fact Hans did so. He wrote Tom he had paid it. Tom then dismissed the matter from his mind.

Zed, of course, was taken straight into "Mother Strong's" home. He was already in her heart. How she rejoiced in taking care of him! Infinite content and infinite peace came to the old trapper. He sat quite still, day after day. His eyes followed Mrs. Strong, as she went gracefully to and fro on her household tasks. He used to say, over and over again:

"At last I have a home."

Tom hired Jim as a house-servant, work for which Jim had been splendidly trained on the old Virginia plantation where he had been born. He loved the "old massa" who had trained him and who had freed him by his last will and testament, as many Virginians did in those days. Mrs. Strong protested that she had never had a servant and wouldn't know what to do with one, but she was not as young as she had been, and Tom had his way and

left her in charge of old Jim when he himself left home again for Philadelphia.

Washington was in Philadelphia. So were nearly threescore other leading Americans. Great things were happening in Philadelphia. The real United States of America, the real nation we love so well, was about to be born there.

CHAPTER XI

THIS is the way Washington led up to the making of a real nation, in 1787. He followed the advice Franklin had sent him by Tom, advice which Franklin also set forth at length in the letter Tom took from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon.

Washington, always interested in transportation questions, had taken an active part in urging Maryland and Virginia to build the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which was to connect Chesapeake Bay and the Eastern seaboard with the Ohio River and the Western plains. As part of this plan, Virginia chartered a company to extend the navigation of the James and Potomac,—the Powtomack, as many Virginians spelled it then. The Legislature chose Washington as president of the company and voted him 150 shares of its stock. He took the presidency, but declined the stock, believing he could arouse public interest in the project more readily if it were known that his work for it was unselfish. Now, in

order to improve the upper Potomac, Virginia and Maryland, owning its two banks, had to co-operate. So Washington asked commissioners from both States to meet at Mount Vernon. They did so. Next Pennsylvania was asked to send representatives, because the western end of the proposed canal might be within her borders. When delegates from the three States were gathered at Mount Vernon, their host suggested that they should agree upon a common currency and upon common import taxes. Every State had its own currency, usually a debased and fluctuating one, and its own tariff. This seemed a sensible idea. So did their host's second suggestion that Delaware, which lay upon Chesapeake Bay and had many joint interests with Maryland and Pennsylvania, should also be asked to join the league. But now that four States had thus come together, why should not all thirteen? The Virginia Legislature, deftly handled by James Madison, afterwards the fourth President of the United States, issued a call to all the States to send commissioners to Annapolis, on the first Monday of September, 1786, to consider "commercial regula-

tions.” This was in exact accordance with Franklin’s advice. Only five of the thirteen States sent delegates, but fortunately New York was one of the five, and fortunately Colonel Alexander Hamilton was one of New York’s delegates. An address, written by Hamilton, was adopted by the five States and sent to the thirteen. It urged that they should all meet at Philadelphia on the second Monday of May, 1787, to consider commercial regulations “and other important matters.” The four words I have quoted were the seed that ripened into the Constitution of the United States, which the great English statesman, William E. Gladstone, who did not love us any too well, called “the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.” In October, 1786, Congress, then in session in New York, was asked to indorse the calling of the Convention. Rufus King, not yet a full convert to Washington’s views, carried a resolution through Congress against the proposed conference. Things looked dark. Just then, however, Virginia named a delegation of first-class men and put Washington at the head of it. The magic of

that mighty name stirred the country he had saved. New Jersey named delegates. Pennsylvania did likewise. Rufus King came over to the right side and moved that Congress itself call the Convention. Congress did so. All the States except Rhode Island sent delegates. The chance to make a nation had come.

From May 14th to May 25th, the delegates straggled into the pleasant Quaker city. On the 25th, a quorum gathered in Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence had been made, July 4, 1776. By unanimous vote, George Washington of Virginia was chosen to preside. Then Pennsylvania added Benjamin Franklin to the delegation she had already chosen, so that there might be another man, satisfactory to all the warring factions of the warring States, to preside in case of the absence of Washington. The Convention held all its sessions in secret. The first thing an eager country heard was in September of 1787, when the Convention, or the great majority of its members, signed the Constitution which has been the Magna Charta of American liberties from that

day to this. It was published to the world and the Convention adjourned, its good work done.



INDEPENDENCE HALL IN 1776

Much good work remained to be done by the friends of the Constitution. It was not to go into

effect until nine of the thirteen States ratified it. In every State there was fierce opposition. The rancor of its enemies reached the point of calling Washington a born fool and Franklin a fool from age. Early in the Convention Washington had opposed the idea that the Constitution should be a colorless document, running counter to nobody's prejudices. He had said: "Let us erect a standard, to which the wise and the honest can repair; the event is in the hand of God." Those splendid words are carved on the southern front of the Washington Arch, which stands in stately beauty at the foot of Fifth Avenue, in Washington Square, New York. The Square was once a potter's field, later a fashionable center, now an Italian playground, though some of the most beautiful old houses in the city still form its northern boundary. When the Constitution had been signed, Benjamin Franklin, then eighty-one years old, who, with Washington, had signed the Declaration of Independence in that same room eleven years before, pointed to a half-sun chiseled on the back of Washington's chair, and said: "As I have been sitting here all these weeks, I have



THE WASHINGTON ARCH, NEW YORK

often wondered whether yonder sun was setting or rising. But now I know that it is a rising sun."

While the Convention sat, John Fitch launched his first steamboat upon the Delaware.

Tom had rendered his accounts to Washington as soon as he reached Philadelphia. The General went over them carefully, as his custom was, checking off the additions and subtractions. He found them all correct. Then he congratulated Tom on his successful business venture. Then they divided the substantial profits, to their joint satisfaction. Washington shook his head over what Tom had to say about General Wilkinson, but he was too busy with the Convention to bother about Kentucky just then. Somewhat later, Wilkinson did a good thing for his country, incidentally a very profitable thing for himself. In January, 1789, he got together a flotilla of twenty-five flatboats, with 150 armed men, and a few small cannon. The boats carried away so much wheat and pork and corn that provision-prices in Kentucky rose sixty per cent. Under the American flag, the flotilla went by Natchez, where Gayoso watched hungrily, but was afraid to

try to levy tribute. It anchored without opposition at New Orleans. Wilkinson made a small fortune out of the venture. The free navigation of the Mississippi became a fact. It was soon recognized by Spain. It continued until Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, cracked the Constitution and bought the vast tract called Louisiana, now in whole or part the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Montana, and the two Dakotas. He bought it for \$15,000,000 from Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French, who had torn it from the feeble hands of Spain. The purchase more than doubled the area of our country. It was 825,000 square miles before and now became about 2,000,000 square miles. There is one block of ground in New York City to-day that is worth more than Jefferson paid for this empire.

Mrs. John Claypoole was Tom's landlady at Philadelphia. Her house was at 239 Arch Street. It was a small two-story-and-attic brick dwelling. One marble step led up to the front door. There was one window on the first floor, two on the second,

and a dormer-window in the roof. Mrs. Claypoole was rather a celebrated character. She was born January 1, 1752, of sturdy Quaker parents. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Griscom. Her father was a builder and had worked on the erection of Independence Hall. In December, 1773, Betsey Griscom ran away with an upholsterer's apprentice, one John Ross, and married him. He was an Episcopalian, the son of the Rev. Æneas Ross. His wife was promptly turned out of the Quaker fold, because she had gone outside of it for a husband. In 1775, John Ross was injured upon a wharf in Philadelphia, while guarding some military stores. He died of this injury at his home, 239 Arch Street, in January, 1776. His widow carried on his upholstery business at this house. In May, 1776, Mrs. Betsey Ross, a young and beautiful widow, famous for her skill with the needle, had the honor of receiving a visit from three members of the Continental Congress, General George Washington of Virginia, Colonel George Ross, and Mr. Robert Morris of Pennsylvania. The first two had signed the Declaration of Independence. The third was the financial

genius of the Revolution. The distinguished trio were a Committee of Congress, charged with the duty of having a flag made for the new nation. Colonel Ross suggested their asking his niece by marriage to make the flag. So they called upon her. Would Mistress Betsey Ross make it? She would and she did. That same month, May 28th, 1776, Washington sent orders to General Putnam in New York that "the several colonels . . . hurry to get their colors done." As Congress had no money, Colonel Ross paid his niece for her work. In May, 1777, a year later, Congress voted her £14. 12s. 2d. for flags she had made for the fleet in the Delaware River. She was then the wife of Captain Joseph Ashburn, whom she had married in January of that year, at the end of the first twelvemonth of her widowhood. Captain Ashburn was captured by the British and died in prison in England in 1782. John Claypoole, a fellow-prisoner, nursed Ashburn until he died; brought his diary and his last messages to his wife; and married her, in 1783, as soon as she had mourned for the year she seems to have allowed herself between husbands. Claypoole lived until

1817, but as he was a lifelong invalid from a wound gotten at the battle of Germantown and finally died of it, Betsey Ross may be said to have laid three husbands upon the altar of her country,—upon which Artemus Ward was willing to sacrifice all his wife's relations. The Philadelphia Friends had thrust out of their communion all its members who had fought for liberty, so in 1793 a "Free Quaker" church was organized by these red-blooded Friends. The "Free Quakers" were sometimes called the "Fighting Quakers." Mrs. Claypoole was one of them. In their meeting-house, after her death in 1836, her pew was marked with a brass-plate with the legend: "In this pew worshiped Betsey Ross, who made the first flag." The flags she made were not quite of the present pattern, but they were in use for over a year before Congress legislated on the subject. The present flag, of course with only thirteen stars, was adopted by Congress in June, 1777. It first floated at Fort Stanwix, near Oriskany, New York, in September of that year.

With the money he had made at New Orleans, Tom bought for his mother the house next her own

on Broad Street and a small farm farther north on Manhattan Island. He bought for himself a little shipyard, which he put in charge of Betsey Carhart's father. Incidentally, this brought Miss Betsey to New York to live. Tom was living chiefly at Mount Vernon, whence Washington directed the fight for the ratification of the Constitution. Soon he came hurrying back to New York. He brought a message for Alexander Hamilton.

"Tell Colonel Hamilton," Washington said to Tom, "that to win this fight we must have a series of papers, one every week or so, which will appeal to the public mind and conscience and will induce the people to vote for the Constitution. I have sounded Mr. Madison, who says he will aid in such a work, but cannot lead in it. He thinks Colonel Hamilton is the man to do it. Probably Mr. Jay will help. Tell the Colonel, however, that his old chief calls again on his staff-officer and knows he will not call in vain."

Tom rode posthaste to New York. After an evening at the Carharts' and a night at home, he walked up Broad Street to Wall and turned a few

steps eastward, where Hamilton had his law-office. A disappointment awaited him. The Colonel was not there; would not be there for an indefinite period; had taken a sloop for Albany early that very morning.

There was nothing to do but chase after the statesman. It was to be a stern-chase, but it might not be a long one, for sloops were slow; the shifting winds of the Hudson often put many tacks to and fro into one mile northward; and Billy-boy was fresh and untired in his stable. Another horse had brought Tom on from Mount Vernon. With a gay good-by to his mother, he was off. Billy-boy settled down into a long, swinging stride as soon as he reached "the Common," now City Hall Park, then the northern limit of the little town. He kept his pace to the end of the island and galloped over "the King's bridge," which crossed Spuyten Duyvil Creek just where Kingsbridge crosses it to-day. It cost a pedestrian threepence to use the bridge. June 12th, 1693, William and Mary of England had granted a royal charter to Frederick Philipse for "a Lordship or Manor of Philipsborough in

free and common soccage, according to the tenure of our Manor of East Greenwich within our County of Kent in our realm of England, yielding, rendering, and paying therefor, yearly and every year, on the feast-day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at our fort in New York, unto us, our heirs and successors, the annual rent of £4. 12s. current money of our said Province." The charter further provided that the Lord of the Manor could build a bridge across Spuyten Duyvil Creek; that it should be called the King's bridge; and that three-pence or more should be the toll thereof, to be collected by Lord Frederick, his heirs and assigns forever. A sixpence carried both Tom and Billy-boy across the old bridge. He galloped northward along the Hudson. From a hilltop near Yonkers, he caught sight of a sloop floating idly on the river, that reflected it in its calm waters. There was not a breath of air. It was as beautiful as Wordsworth's vision in "Yarrow Revisited":

"Let . . .

The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow."

The tide was just on the ebb, so ocean and river

were co-operating to take the sloop back to town. Tom rode to the shore, hired a boat, arranged to have Billy-boy cared for, and betook himself to the "Saucy Polly," a smart packet-boat that held but one passenger. It was Alexander Hamilton on his way to Albany to consult with his father-in-law, General Schuyler, how best to carry New York for the new Constitution. Hamilton welcomed our hero gladly. He listened with profound interest to the message from Washington. Then he took from his luggage an inkhorn, some quill-pens, paper, and a sand-box. The use of a sand-box instead of blotting paper still survives in the United States Senate.

"I know what the General wants," said Hamilton. "With Madison's help and Jay's, I can make things clear to the people. What shall we call the papers? I have it. They shall be called 'The Federalist.' We have baptized the baby, Captain Strong, before it is born. Now let me see if I cannot fashion it in comely shape."

He mused for a moment, took up a quill, and scratched it swiftly across the paper.

“How will this do for a beginning?” he asked. Then he read aloud:

“To the people of the State of New York:

“After an unequivocal experience of the inefficiency of the subsisting Federal Government, you are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance.”

Thus was begun in the cabin of a sloop becalmed on the Hudson one of the greatest of all books on politics. “The Federalist” has been almost forgotten in the clash and clangor and clamor of these strenuous days, but it will be studied by thoughtful men for many a decade to come. It is one of the greatest books on government ever written. It was published in the *Independent Journal* of New York, sometimes once a week, sometimes three or four times a week. Of its eighty-five chapters, Alexander Hamilton wrote fifty-one, James Madison twenty-nine, and John Jay five. In the quaint fashion of the day, each number was signed “Publius.”

Tom rose to go. Hamilton shook hands with him, saying:

"Let the General be sure of all the help I can give."

Before Billy-boy's hoofs rang again on the cobblestones of Broad Street, the first number of "The Federalist" was finished. In a few days it was published. Then in a few hours it was on everybody's lips. Many exulted in it. Many denounced it. Some of them tried to answer it, but none succeeded in doing so. So far as a complex result can be traced back to one cause, we may say that "The Federalist" secured the ratification of the Constitution that made us a nation. The Constitution has been somewhat amended. It needs some amendments now. No paper drawn in 1787 for the government of 3,500,000 people could meet all the needs of 1912 in the government of 100,000,000 people. But what Gladstone said of it is true. It is a "most wonderful work." It is the charter of our liberties.

A few days afterwards, Tom was sauntering down Nassau Street on a bright morning, on his way to his shipyard. He was thinking of going into partnership with his tenant, old Mr. Carhart.

In front of the law-office of Colonel Aaron Burr, a mean and greasy man tapped him on the shoulder. He turned, rather angry at the familiarity. The mean and greasy man was a tipstaff.

"I have a warrant for your honor," he said. "No doubt you will come with me peacefully. There's no need people should know you're arrested."

"Arrested?" said Tom. "For what?"

"At the suit of Ebenezer Shark versus Hans Rolf, with Thomas Strong impleaded as surety for said Rolf. Judgment has been entered for \$200 and costs, execution issued and unpaid. Here is the warrant for the taking of your honor's body."

"The debt was long since paid and I never heard of the suit."

"Sure, your honor can get a lawyer to say all that to the court, but first you must go to the debtors' prison."

A gentle, persuasive voice fell on Tom's ear.

"What is the matter, Captain Strong? Is this fellow pestering you? I have not the pleasure of

your acquaintance, but I know who you are. And I am Aaron Burr, at your service."

Jonathan Edwards was one of the greatest theologians this country has ever produced. His life was blameless. He was a lovable man. But his stern creed made him believe that hell was full of infants "not a span long." His grandson, Aaron Burr, was a man of utter charm, utterly without character. The grandfather believed too much. The grandson believed too little. His early career was brilliant. His fall was that of Lucifer. He dreamed of being an emperor. He became a vice-president of the United States. He murdered Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He was tried for treason. He died, burdened with debt and with the curses of his fellow-countrymen. At this time, he was one of the leading lawyers and leading Antifederalists of New York. He turned to the tipstaff.

"Let me see your warrant."

He examined it and said to Tom:

"The papers seem regular. Yet I heard you say the debt was paid and you had had no notice of the suit."

"That is true, Colonel Burr. I have property to pay the claim, but it is already paid. 'Twas an indorsement for a friend. He paid it."

"How know you that?"

"He wrote me so."

"And you believe him?"

"I would answer for his truthfulness with my life."

"This smacks of villainy," said Burr. "Methinks I have heard of some sharp practices by this Ebenezer Shark. Well, Captain, you must go to the debtors' prison. The law will have it so. But I will have you out of it within an hour. You may be sure of that."

Tom walked by the tipstaff's side in a sore humor. It seemed to him that every man they met was saying to himself: "So young Strong has been caught at last; what is his crime?" At the prison he was thrust into a filthy cell. His request for a messenger was refused. The turnkeys jeered at him. A few years ago, before this building had been torn down, it was thus described: "The jail on the Commons, built about 1760, was the finest public edifice of its

day. It was a torture-chamber for patriot prisoners during the Revolution. Thereafter, as a debtors' prison, it became the most popular public edifice of its day; for from January second to December third of 1788, eleven hundred and sixty-two persons, one out of every twenty-five citizens, were jailed there for debt. Even in our day, when it is used as the Hall of Records, is neglected and dingy, and is said to have recorded within it all the smells of the Island from the Dutch days down, it is still beautiful. It has a right to be; for it is a reproduction in miniature of the great fane of Diana of Ephesus."

Burr was better than his word. Before the hour had run, he brought an order for Tom's release. Our hero was again a free man.

"How can I thank you, Colonel Burr? And how did you do it?"

"Faith, I had a few hundred dollars to spare and I paid the debt. You will repay me when 'tis convenient, if I do not get the money back from Shark. If he has played villain and locked you up on a debt that was paid, the rogue shall sweat for it."

"I can borrow the money this morning, Colonel,

and will do so. And what are your fees for the great service you have done me?"

"My fee?" said Burr, looking rather sadly at the honest face, beaming with gratitude, that was lifted to his own. "My fee? It is that Captain Strong shall henceforth think and speak a little more kindly of Colonel Burr than he has hitherto done."

Tom blushed scarlet. An ardent friend of Hamilton, he had not always measured his words in speaking of Hamilton's deadly enemy, Aaron Burr.

"You have taught me to be a Christian, Colonel Burr, and——"

"That is more in my grandfather's line than in mine, I fear."

"Will you accept my apologies and my sincerest thanks?"

"Say no more, Captain. The account is closed."

With a hearty handshake the two parted. When Tom came back to Burr's office with the money, he found that that account, too, was closed. Burr had sent for Ebenezer Shark and terrified him into a confession. Hans had paid the money. Shark, relying upon Hans's absence, had sued Tom as his

surety; had hired a rogue to impersonate Tom; had taken judgment; and had expected to collect his debt twice. With a trembling hand he paid Burr the money the latter had paid into court. With a still more trembling hand, he signed his confession. Burr read it aloud to Tom, while Shark cowered in the corner.

“Will you have him jailed, Captain? Say but the word and he is sure of prison life for at least five years.”

“Five minutes of it made me deadly ill. I would not have another man suffer as I did. Let the scoundrel go.”

Shark fled at the word. With more words of gratitude, Tom left the lawyer's office. Years afterwards, his gratitude showed itself in something more than words, when sorrow after sorrow seemed Aaron Burr's only lot in life.

The Constitution had been ratified. The ninth State, which cast the decisive vote in its favor, was New Hampshire, on June 21st, 1788. The New Hampshire Convention had met on June 17th, the

anniversary of Bunker Hill. Virginia and New York and North Carolina followed. Little Rhode Island, fearful to the end of being oppressed by the big States, did not complete the roll until May 29th, 1790, when George Washington had been for more than a year the President of the United States.

CHAPTER XII

APRIL 6th, 1788, Congress formally counted the first electoral votes ever cast in this country. The presiding officer announced that George Washington, Esquire, of Virginia, had received all sixty-nine of them and was duly elected the first President of the United States of America. There was huzzaing outside and a salvo of cannon. Before the echoes had died away, Tom Strong, on Billy-boy, his horse, was off for Mount Vernon, eager to be the first to give his great commander the great news. He was the first, but only by an hour. Other men had spurred their good steeds there, too, but Billy-boy was the winner of the race.

April 14th, 1788, Tom saw at Mount Vernon the formal announcement to Washington that his country had called him again into her service. Lady Washington stood at the General's right, a little behind him. Her grandchildren clustered about her. Her daughter had died, young and unmarried. Her

son had died in 1781, from a cold caught in the trenches at Yorktown. His children were with her. A little group of notable Virginians had come to do honor to the greatest of them all. It was headed by George Mason, of Gunston Hall, whom Washington called "dear George." The secretary of Congress read aloud a formal letter from the president of that body, notifying Washington that he was the unanimous choice of his countrymen for what is, in some respects, the greatest office in the world. The General spoke a few words of acceptance. Wine and cake were served. The simple ceremony was over.

"It will please me, Captain Strong, if you will do me the honor to accompany me to New York."

So Washington had said. Tom gladly agreed to do so.

The departure was delayed two days, partly because the new President had to borrow a goodly sum of money in order to meet the expenses of "the presidential court," which he was expected to maintain upon a ceremonious and costly scale. A



STATUE OF WASHINGTON, NEW YORK SUB-TREASURY

neighbor, Captain Richard Conway, lent him ten thousand pounds sterling,—fifty thousand dollars. Mrs. Washington, clinging to his coat-button, as was her custom, warned “the General,” as she always called him, against extravagance. Meanwhile, she was preparing in her mind a list of personal purchases, which were to make her costumes notable for both style and cost in the coming court, where New York women were to vie in magnificence with Virginian dames. April 16th, 1788, Washington wrote in his diary: “About ten o’clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and with a mind oppressed with . . . anxious and fearful sensations . . . set out for New York.”

The journey northward was one long festival. Every town clamored to entertain the new President. Reception-committees crowded the road. Triumphal arches, decked with the tender green of spring, bestrode the highway. At Trenton, the music of “Hail, Columbia!” then called “The President’s March,” was heard for the first time. At Trenton, too, a bevy of pretty girls strewed

with roses the bridge that crossed the Assunpink Creek,—a creek that had been the scene of one of Washington's deftest stratagems. One result of that stratagem had been that the British captured Tom Strong, Washington's scout. Now Captain Thomas Strong, acting aide-de-camp of President George Washington, felt Billy-boy's hoofs fall gently on the petals of soft rosebuds. From Elizabeth-town Point, the party was taken to the Battery in "the President's barge, rowed by thirteen eminent pilots, in a handsome white dress." They landed at Peck's Slip on April 23d. Shouting thousands greeted them. The cry was:

"Long live President Washington and God bless Lady Washington!"

They went directly to a house that had been hired for them. It stood at the corner of Pearl and Cherry Streets. One of the great stone arches of the Brooklyn Bridge now springs from its site. Pearl was still called Queen Street in 1789. Dr. Manasseh Cutler has left on record that Queen Street was a whole mile long; that it was the heart of fashionable New York; that the houses upon it were

four and even six stories high; and that it was wide enough for three persons to walk abreast. It had no sidewalks. The house was a square dwelling, three stories high, with five windows on each

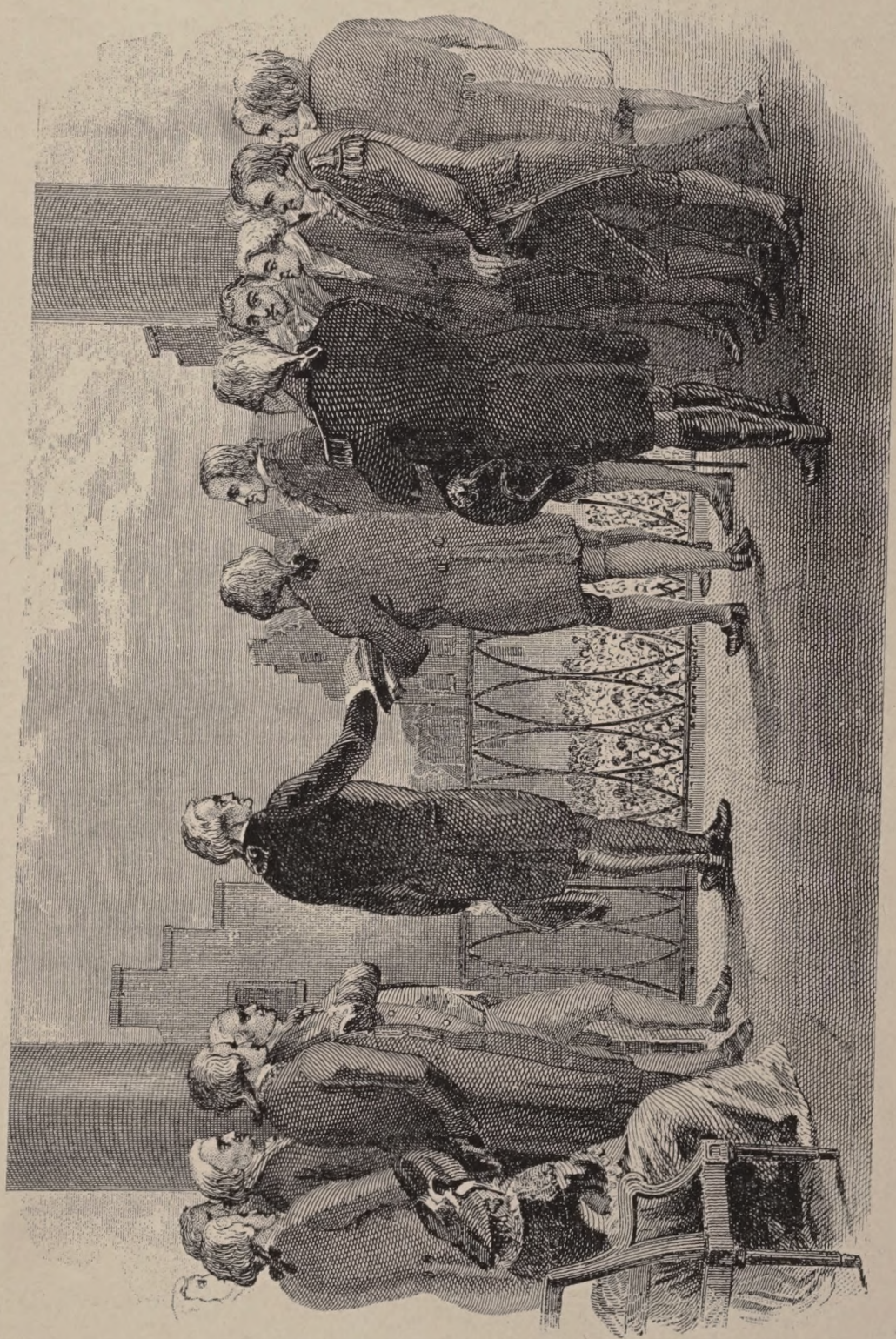


THE WALTER FRANKLIN HOUSE, WASHINGTON'S
RESIDENCE IN NEW YORK

street. The ceilings were rather low,—so low, in fact, that at one of Lady Washington's receptions the tall and stately Miss McEvers found the ostrich-feathers in her high-piled hair ablaze from the chandelier. Those receptions ended, as the Mount Vernon evenings had ended, at precisely nine o'clock.

Tom left President Washington and Lady Washington at the threshold of their new home, when its door was opened by Jeremy, the stately majordomo from Mount Vernon, a most distinguished old darky, with manners even more impressive than those of the master he worshiped. Then back to Broad Street, to his mother's arms. That evening, he went of course to see the tenant of his shipyard—and Betsey Carhart, the tenant's daughter.

In one more ceremonial, Tom was to figure by Washington's side. April 30th, 1787, Wall and Broad Streets were packed. All New York had gathered there; the men, gentry and tradefolk and artisans alike, in the street; the women in their gayest attire crowding every window of the neighboring residences. The Stars-and-Stripes flew everywhere. Three flags were draped about the porch of the fat little house on Broad Street, where Mrs. Strong, the proudest mother in all the world, and Zed, the proudest friend in all the world, sat with Mr. Carhart and his daughter. Mrs. Strong was crying softly with joy. The country she had loved enough to give it her son was now a strong



WASHINGTON TAKING THE OATH

nation. Her son, who had helped to make it so, had come back to her in safety and honor. There was sure to be future prosperity for Washington's and Hamilton's young friend. Her brimming eyes sought the recessed porch on the second story of "Federal Hall," which stood, facing down Broad Street, where the United States Sub-treasury stands now. It was designed by Major L'Enfant, the architect of the most beautiful building in America, the City Hall of New York, and the man who drew the ground-plan of the City of Washington.

In the central one of the three arches in the recessed porch, a tall man stepped to the front and looked down upon the cheering multitude. He was dressed in a dark-brown cloth suit, of American make. He wore long white silk stockings. There were silver buckles on his low shoes. A dress-sword with a steel hilt hung at his side. A crimson-covered Bible lay on a table before him. The table cover was of crimson velvet. Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York, faced him. Every sound was hushed. The oath of office was administered. George Washington, with head bared and right hand

resting upon the Bible, took the oath. That done, he had become the first President of the United States.

Then cannon thundered and cheers again arose. Flags were waved wildly from every house. Mrs. Strong and Zed and Betsey Carhart waved their three flags vigorously, but they waved them, not at George Washington, the hero they venerated, but at Tom Strong, the boy they loved.

THE END

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